
A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.15 January 1987
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AMTIX!
Christmas Special
MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE AMSTRAD COMPUTERS
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AMTIX! Magazine is published monthly by **Newsfield Ltd**, 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ
☎ Subscriptions **0584 5851**
☎ Mail Order **0584 5620**
☎ Editorial **0584 5852**
☎ Advertising Information and bookings **0584 5852** and 0584 4603 (direct line).

Printed in England by **Carlisle Web Offset Ltd**, Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7NR Member of the BPCC Group
Colour Origination by **Scan Studios** Wallace Road, London N1
Distributed by COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middx UB7 7QE
Subscriptions: 12 issues £15.00 post included (UK Mainland); **Europe**, 12 issues £22.00 post included. Outside Europe by arrangement in writing. Please check for special offers within the magazine.

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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

Cover by Oliver Frey

MERRY MAIN HEADINGS

AMTIX! COMPETITIONS GALORE

MERRY CHRISTMAS ACCOLADES

FABULOUS FESTIVE FEATURES

Eat, drink and be merry — but don't forget to pick up the February issue of AMTIX! at a newsagents near you from 8th January.



A Spectrum 48K
B CBM 64/128
C Amstrad
D C16 plus 4
E Atari
F BBC
G Electron
H MSX
Mastertronic
Games
No 1 F
Unbelievable Ultimate
Jetpac
Tranzam
Lunar Jetman
Pssst
A
Atic Atac
Sabre Wolf
Underwurlde
Alien 8
A
Entombed
Blackwyche
Staff of Karnath
Imhotep
B
Sabre Wulf
Alien 8
Nightshades
C £7.99
Jetpac
Nightshades
Knightlore
Sabre Wulf
F
Alien 8
Gunfright
Knightlore
Nightshades
H
Arcade Classics
Pac Man
Dug Dug
Mr. Do!
Pole Position
B
Pac Man
Dug Dug
Mr. Do!
Pole Position
E
WarGame Greats
Tigers in the Snow
Germany 1985
Combat Leader
Knights of the Desert
B
Big names Bonanza
Fight Night
Stellar 7
Forbidden Forest
Talladega
B
Krazy Kids
Kermit
Donald Duck
Return to Oz
Congo Bongo
B
All cassettes £9.99 [Except Unbelievable Ultimate Amstrad £7.99]

At a time when you're being showered with cut price bargains, amazing value packs or stunning compilations (of games you've never heard of?), then it's hard to work out what is a good buy and what isn't. Cast off the confusion and look no more, for here we present a range of compilations of games that are classics in their own right, or have established pedigrees which guarantee their quality.
Here we have compiled a series of products which stand as the master of any of its rivals.

r quality compilations

Shoot Em-Ups

Super Zaxxon
Dropzone
Blue Max 2001
Fort Apocalypse
(B) (E)

Amstrad Academy

Zorro
Bruce Lee
Dambusters
Bounty Bob
(C)

Spectrum Stingers

Bruce Lee
Zorro
Pole Position
Cyberun
(A)

Scott Adams Scoops

Voodoo Castle
Strange Odyssey
Buckaroo Bonzai*
Pirate Adventure
(A) (B) (C) (D)

Voodoo Castle
Strange Odyssey
Buckaroo Bonzai*
Pirate Adventure
(E) (F) (G) (H)

Broderbund Blasters

Karateka
Stealth
Choplifter
Spellunker
(B)

Atari Aces

Zorro
Up n Down
Spy Hunter
Tapper
(E)

Platform Perfection

Zorro
Bruce Lee
Bounty Bob
Ghostchaser
(E)

Zorro
Bruce Lee
Bounty Bob
Ghostchaser
(B)

* (Previously unreleased)

U.S. Gold, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 3563388

AMTIX!

AMTIX Christmas Special

SEASONAL GREETINGS FROM THE TEAM



Well here it is, the biggest, and in the team's view, the best ever copy of AMTIX! for your festive delight. We have a record number of reviews in this issue, including four almighty accolades, *Heartland*, *Zombi*, *Bobby Bearing*, and *Thanatos*, and a special mega section of Previews.

It's hard to believe that it is almost 12 months since I joined AMTIX! as joint editor with Jeremy Spencer. Since then a lot has happened and there have been quite a lot of changes both in the organisation and staffing at the Towers! I've lost Big J, Robin Candy and Lee Paddon but gained Richard Eddy, Massimo Valducci, and Tony Clarke. I've also gained Graeme Kidd as my publishing executive. Together we have developed and revitalised the magazine to its present very high state of the art.

As you read this Christmas is only a few weeks away yet we are already well advanced with the February cover issue. Publishing magazines is a strange business for the process induces a type of time distortion, which can be quite difficult to cope with. You tend to lose track of the day, and even the week on occasions!

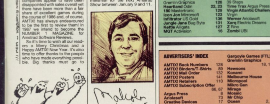
On the games front software companies appear to have been disappointed with sales overall yet there have been more than a fair share of excellent games during the course of 1986 and, of course, AMTIX! has always endeavoured to be the first to review them! In 1987 we intend to become the NUMBER 1 MAGAZINE for Amstrad Software Reviews.

So it's time to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy AMTIX! New Year. It's also time to offer thanks to the people who have made everything possible. Big thanks must go to Amstrad for bringing out the PCW8256. They appear to have bred like rabbits in AMTIX! Towers, which is just as well, as almost every word in this magazine starts off its life on dear Joyce. Thanks must also go to my team, and to everyone else within the Newsfield organisation who ensure the magazine looks so good at the end of the day.

We must all say a big thank you to our readers who have continued to put their hands in their pockets thereby providing the means by which we are able to eke out an existence between issues. Stay with the new look AMTIX!, keep feeding us, and we will keep writing. (Unless we have a nervous breakdown first -RE)

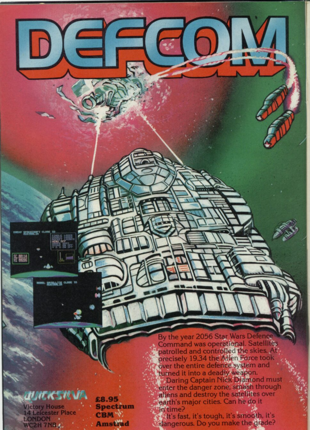
Finally if you want to see the whole team in person come along to the Novotel in London's Hammersmith for the next Amstrad Show between January 9 and 11.

'GRUMLINS' APPEAR COURTESY OF JOHN RICHARDSON — WOW !!!



GAMES REVIEWED

ADVERTISERS' INDEX


DEFCOM
By the year 2056 Star Wars Defence Command was operational. Satellites patrolled and controlled the skies. At precisely 19.34 the Alien Force took over the entire defence system and turned it into a deadly weapon.
Daring Captain Nick Diamond must enter the danger zone, smash through aliens and destroy the satellites over earth's major cities. Can he do it in time?
It's fast, it's tough, it's smooth, it's dangerous. Do you make the grade?
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LONDON
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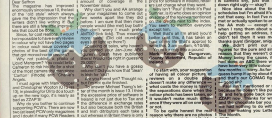
ON THE SPOT

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND TOO MANY CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

And so Christmas is once again upon us, the lights are being strung across Ludlow and the fairies are coming out in force — and what am I doing? Answering blooming letters! Have I got time to go Christmas shopping with Richard, Gary Penn and Sue to get a Chrissy tree? Have I heck! Never mind I'll just camp out at their penthouse suite while the festivities are happening. Hope Santa brings you everything you want and don't drink too much — after all I should appreciate some letters next year written without a drunken slur. So until we meet again in 1987 I shall bid you all goodnight and wish you all the best for the season.

THE CHRISTMAS LETTER OF THE MONTH

WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY?



Dear Saffron
The magazine has improved enormously since issue 10, the last of the 'old style' which always gave me the impression that the writers didn't like writing it! But there are still a few little improvelets that could be done.

Since, for cost reasons, it would be impossible to have every review in colour why not have two pages in colour each issue covered in photos of the best of the games that got monochrome reviews?

Why not publish a photo of Lloyd Mangram? You could bribe Cameron to risk his life for a shot of the most camera shy man since 'Carlton' (Rhoda) and 'Charlie's Angels.

I must agree with Mark Hooper and Christopher Wooton (OTS iss 13), in pleading for Oli to do a touch up on the new logo, it's nearly as bad as ZZAP'S!

Why do you bother to continue supporting PCW's. There are now two (at least) PCW only magazines and I doubt if many PCW Readers were happy with the very small amount of coverage in the November issue.

Why don't you and AA arrange for your magazines to come out two weeks apart like they did before. I am sure that then more people would (like me!) buy both! (but don't worry I much prefer AMTIX! (lick lick)). Thus meaning more sales! (Did old crumbly's eyes just light up there?)

Speaking of sales, why haven't you printed your Jan-June ABC figures? Crash have published theirs! Would I be right in guessing 25,000?

Why don't you have a gossip column? Did you know that 'Sean' is Irish for 'old'!

Are you bored yet? Thought so, but I'm not quite finished.

To answer Michael Tsang's letter of the month is issue 13. I think the excessive price of software in Ireland is not just due to Tax and the difference in exchange rates but also because both the British and Irish ditributors each take a cut whereas in Britain there is only one distributor. Also there is no set price for software in Ireland, retailers just charge what they want.

Why isn't 'Paul' (I think it's Paul Sumner, is it) who does an opinion on some of the reviews mentioned on the credits next to the index. You seem to mention everyone except him.

Well that's all I'm afraid (you'd better print this, it has taken an hour of my life (that's approx) to write this, 3 am — 4am, 4/10/86).

Yours for only 99p a pound
Mark Kenneally, Dungarvan, County Waterford, Republic of Ireland.

To start with, your suggestion of having all colour picture of reviews on a double page doesn't make any difference — what costs the money is having the separations done when the colour photo has been taken, so it wouldn't make much difference if they were all on one page or not.

To be quite honest the real reason why there are no photos of old misery guts is not that he is camera shy, just that he's down right ugly — okay?

Nice idea about the timing schedules but I'm afraid it's just not that easy. In fact I've never met or actually spoken to any of the AA mob — except once when I rang them about some help getting an address, but I didn't tell them it was me — thanks guys! (Snigger, snigger!)

We didn't print our ABC figures for the pure and simple reason that they weren't done. Money being the cause, if we had done an ABC there would have been very little colour for a few months — sorry. As for your guess bump it up by about 6,000 and that's our COMAG figures — good eh?

Paul isn't mentioned or seen because he doesn't like publicity and he's gone back over to ZZAP! now. Thanks for writing and the chocolate bar you sent me had nothing to do with the fact I'm making you Letter Of The Month.
ST

AND NOW . . . A recipe for an AMTIX! Christmas Pud!

TIME FOR CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Dear Saffron
You asked for it, so here it is . . .
To make the Amtix! pud you'll need:

175g (6oz) plain flour
2 teaspoons ground mixed spice
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon grated nutmeg
175g (6oz) fresh white breadcrumbs
175g (6oz) butter
175g (6oz) soft brown sugar
350g (12g) sultanas
250g (8oz) raisins
250g (8oz) currants
75g (3oz) chopped mixed peel
grated rind and juice of 1 orange (exciting eh?)
120ml (4 fl oz) brown ale (even better)
2 eggs, beaten (not with a brolly)

Now for the magical touch ....

Sift flour and spices into a bowl, add the breadcrumbs and rub in butter. Add the remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly.

Turn into a greased 1.5 litre (2½ pints for you non metrics) pudding basin, cover with a pudding cloth or greaseproof paper and foil and store in a cool dry place.

To Serve: (the good bit): steam pudding again for 2 to 2½ hours. Turn out onto a warm dish. If you want, pour 2 to 3 tablespoons of warmed brandy and ignite (yeh!). Serve with cream or brandy butter and top with holly.

Serves 8 - 10 so you'd better make 3 for the AMTIX! team.

Mike Lloyd, Southampton.

Well done Mike, there's a T Shirt winging its way to you as the first winner of the official AMTIX! pud, and jolly nice it is too — try it!
ST

CHRISTMAS PUD, MK 2

Dear Saffron
Okay here's a Christmas pud' for your seasonal issue of Amtix!, but unfortunately you have to have a microwave to cook it:-

AMTIX! CHRISTMAS PUD

Cooking container: either two 2½ pint basins; or four one pint basins.
Cooking time: see below
Number of servings: 6-8

Ingredients
6 oz (175g) currants
4 oz (100g) sultanas
10 oz (275g) raisins
4 oz (100g) dried mixed peel
4 tablespoons (60ml) brandy
1 tablespoons (15ml) black treacle
3 grade 3 eggs, lightly beaten
5 fl oz (142ml) milk
2 teaspoons (10ml) gravy browning (to colour the pudding)
4 oz (100g) dark soft brown sugar
4 oz (100g) caster sugar
6 oz (175g) shredded suet
3 oz (75g) fresh breadcrumbs
3 oz (75g) chopped almonds
1 oz (25g) glace cherries
½ level teaspoon (2.5ml) salt
level teaspoon (1.25ml) cinnamon
level teaspoon powdered ginger
level teaspoon ground nutmeg
grated rind of ½ lemon
grated rind of ½ orange
6 oz (175g) plain flour

Optional extras:- pinch of ground saffron, 4 tablespoons (60ml) brandy, sherry and rum!! to enhance flavour.

Method:

1. Cover dried fruits in boiling water in a large bowl. Heat for 4 minutes, then leave to stand for 1 hour.

2. Strain fruit and add liqueurs. Leave (!) to stand overnight or several hours.

3. Stir in all liquids then mix in rest of ingredient.

4. Grease basins and put mixture into them. Cover tops loosely with cling film. Do not insert any form of metals. Cook as indicated below.

Cooking:

(varies according to power and setting of machine — in this case it will be 500w and full power).

2lb pud' - Microwave 6 mins. Stand 5 mins. Microwave 6 - 7 mins.

1lb pud' - Microwave 3 mins. Stand 4 mins. Microwave 2½-3 mins.

NB. The pudding may look a bit pale but it really tastes moist and delicious. It is best complemented by white sauce, rum butter, ice-cream and thick, thick cream.

John Sholicar, an avid AMTIX! reader.

There's also a T Shirt on the way to you John. Two prizes were awarded as this was the best micro wave entry, this one is great too, but don't try it if you're on a diet!
ST

PLUSSED! ONLY NOT MUCH

Dear AMTIX!
When I heard that GAC plus was going to become available I decided to buy a disk drive for my 464 and a typewriter to make everything neat. I have already designed my new adventure game but it would take pages to tell you all about it so instead I will just tell you some outline details.

The game is called *The Magical Mystery* and it's in 2 parts. Part 1 is called *The Land of Jokers and Magic* and it has 152 location all with graphics (an artist I know is going to do all the graphics) and is on Side A of the disk, on side B is part 2, *The Magic Crystals* which has 150 locations making a total of 302 locations. The plot is that after trying out a magic potion, which will give you a transporter machine, this will then take you to part 2 where you have to find 12 magic crystals and when you plug them into your transporter you get taken back to your home in the middle of London. Please tell me what you think of this game. I also phoned up **Incentive** last week and they said if you send back your old *GAC* you must pay another £22 (tape) or £22 (disk) and they send *GAC Plus*. So it's not a FREE upgrade.

Yours sincerely, David Gibbon, Quarry Crescent, Bearpark, County Durham.

I did try ringing Incentive but there was no answer, so I couldn't check up for you.. but it is not being released until the New Year, and no price has been confirmed for it yet.
ST

HEY GUYS, LOOK WHAT I'VE DONE!

Dear ST
On reading your letter from A Durant on the call command. I have found that if you type in this little program.

```
10 for a½17 to 24
20 call a
30 next a
```

Run it and list it, and lo and behold line 20 has changed to:

```
20 Call a PAPER
```

WHY?
PRO (G.Eyers) Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex.
PS Sometimes it goes potty!! or just resets.
PPS When does the car arrive.

Why? Well, I'll be blowed if I know. All my CPC464 does is come up with the tape loading message, 'Press play and then any key'. Maybe the rest of you would like to tell me what yours does — maybe not.
ST

YOU DIDN'T TELL ME

Dear Saffron
Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to talk about the **US Gold** calendar. For nearly twelve months now I have been sticking those little blue stars into the right place, when I read that you have little red stars from **US Gold** games, 'flipping heck', I thought, so I got some money, and went down to the video shop, picked up a copy of *Winter Games*, gave the nice man my money and walked home, loaded up the game, unfolded the instructions, no little red star, took out the inlay card thingy, and surprise, surprise, no little red star. Come on AMTIX!, tell us the truth, we can take it. Oh yes while I'm here, what's all this, "Yours pokingly" etc, at the end of your replies, it looks like a copy of the Beano.

Thank you and Goodnight.
John Mason, Shanklin, Isle of Wight

Not my fault (A favourite phrase of mine) The stars were there in the mag every month — check with US Gold about their stars, they did put them most of the games. It was just a matter of getting the right ones.
ST



EARLY NEW YEAR'S HONOURS

Dear Saffron
Here are my never to be repeated New Year's Honours List (albeit slightly late, or is it early?):
A PAT ON THE BACK FOR . . .
1) **Ambyte**, for giving all us 6128 owners a chance to actually have some decent software which is affordable.
2) To new and original ideas which come from software houses, such as *DEACTIVATORS* or *SPLIT PERSONALITIES* which make the CPC and PCW Amstrads the trend-setters they are.
3) **Mastertronic**, for giving budget software a good name (even though signs of decay are setting in, eg. *5-a-side football*).
BUT BLACK MARKS TO . . .
1) **Level 9**, for thinking they are the be all and end all of adventures (and as for 1000 word vocabularies, who needs them in 'hack 'n'slay' adventures like *Price Of Magick*.
2) **Ocean** and **US Gold** for their general mistreatment of customers, and being slower than a snail in getting out their over-hyped games.
3) A certain magazine called AMTIX! for changing their brillo logo (the logo was the thing that attracted me to AMTIX! rather than AA, but the new features are great, so everything is superb!
Well, that's all for now.
Paul Robinson, Bradford

Yep, they seem pretty fair — who are Ambyte anyway?
ST

NOW FOR A QUICK FLASH!

Dear Saffron
Well, my prayers were answered! When I wrote to you (issue 18) under the guise of Rick 'Flash' Spence I told you how boring and stuffy you were. But, that has all changed. And might I say, it's for the better.
I used to splash out pennies on Amcrap Action but when I saw issue 12, well, I nearly flipped! The new AMTIX! logo is a treat! Your reviews are brilliant, your challenge (mega-fab!) the comps (thank you oh sexy minion!) brill!!!! But you Saffron have changed the face of the mag. Yes, with your bold criticisms, and views are brill. May we have a big glorious full colour pink spikey photo of yourself. I have enclosed a photo of myself at Clankthorpe-On-Sea, as you can see, I'm a handsome devil, so how about it chick?
ver so cool, suave and s-s-sexy Spence from buzzing Drumlough, Electrical Northern Ireland.

Blush, blush. Thanks but I'm too shy really.
ST

ME GOT A FANZINE AND I'M GONNA USE IT!

Dear Saffron
To start off with, please can I have signed photos of the AMTIX! team as I think you are all very cool dudes. The main reason for writing is to spread the word about *Hermes*, a fanzine I am creating with a few friends. I have written off to some software companies for support and am writing some articles at the moment. Will it be alright if I send you the magazine when it is finished for reviewing?
Also, I would like to hear from any keen adventures who would like to write an adventure column in the magazine so please print my full address.
Thomas Wilson, Westacre, Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex, HA1 3LS.
PS Please do some more great subscription offers.
PSS The new mag is brilliant mainly because of Saffron, the Joystick Junkies, Mal, Oli and Ian!

Our resident Fanzine Fanatic, Richard, will take care of your Fanzine when it's finished and it'll be in the quarterly fanzine feature. Subscription offers this month (Being set up as I write) are mega and great — take the chance while it's still open. Any reason for calling it Hermes? I wonder . . .
ST

THE THOUGHTS OF PATRICK

Dear Saffron
I love you.
Um . . . er . . . sorry about that my pen got carried away. Right, first I want to dispute what a reader of your said about the new logo for AMTIX! He suggested gargling with water. I strongly recommend (so what if it's spelt wrongly- it's not now ED) using a concentrated acid.
In many respects your magazine is fantastic, I just haven't worked out what they are yet. (only joking).
First can I complain (yes, thank you) about the amount of adverts in the magazine. There are too many. OK maybe you do need to some to pay for the magazine but I think they should be limited to one per magazine per game — I am referring to Gremlin Graphics adverts on pages 46 and 47 with another one on Page 61 advertising the same product in the November issue.
Also the game *Vera Cru'* was seen in a shop, before you lot received it, by a reliable source, me! I have also seen *Contamination* out.
Despite many complaints about arty competitions and promises to kick the minion about it, it hasn't done much good even the *Scooby Doo* competition (November again) needs a certain degree of artyness.
You said, somewhere that Amtech would be becoming more user friendly. The only way it could become user friendly would be to disappear! So here's an AMTIX Challenge: I challenge Tony (Technocrap) Clarke to justify his existence. If you got rid of it you could give more room for Adventure, Strategy, On the Spot and features (and more competitions).
These features in the November issue were good:
My top five game; Feature on Elite programmer, Adventure, Strategy, Delta 4 feature, On the Spot, AMTIX! Challenge and competitions. Let's have more of this.
Why did I receive my November issue at the end of September, does that mean I get the December issue in October? (I don't know, did you?- ED). Why have you mucked the dates up? Why don't you have two issues with the same date? Why am I writing? Where am I? What is the purpose in life?
Thanks for a good issue but the only good changes would be the changing the title logo back to what it was. Happy Christmas!
By the way the Joyce supplement wasn't really a supplement I have bought most of the magazines and the Joyce one had an average number of pages. The first one I bought had 122 pages (January No 3) the second 106,3rd - 106, 4th - 106, 5th - 114, 6th - 98, 7th - 98, 8th - 106 (Joyce), 9th - 98, 10th - 106 (nos 5 - 13) so the Joyce supplement wasn't so good after all. Why are there less pages now than there normally were? I mean 24 pages is a lot of difference.
Did you know my pen really fancies you and because of this I have included a picture of him on the back of this letter. Handsome ain't he? No, he isn't . . . Yes I am . . . listen who's writing this letter me or you. . . . Me. . . . no you're not, ouch how dare your prick me I'll end up dying of poisoning, ouch - stop it. HELP!
Patrick Samphire. County Down, Northern Ireland.

Look you lot, leave my lovely new logo alone it's going through an inferiority complex as it is. Concerning adverts: the thing is that us mere mortals down in editorial never see adverts all we are told is that, say, 30 adverts are going in — that's all we know. As for your point on reviewing games, you must realise that as you read this issue of AMTIX! the deadline for the February edition has gone — so really if you see a game in the shops when we review it, it means that we've had the game for about six weeks — interesting huh?
I think you missed the point about the *Scooby Doo* competition. The idea was to just fill the areas with the most horrendous colours you can imagine — did you try though? Were you a winner? Me hopes so.
Now, now we can't go around slagging off Mr Clarke, he gets enough hassle as it is, poor Muffin the Mule, oops sorry Tony. I think you're getting a wee bit confused with the cover dates — look here's the idiot's guide just for you! If the cover date is December you get the mag the first week in November — okay? Good. Yes, we don't get a lot of pages, but just look at this monster issue — good eh? Last month's was podgy too! That's the way we hope it will stay.
Give my love to your pen.
ST

POINTS OF VIEW
(With no Barry Took)

Dear Saffron

I must say well done to all the chaps (and chapesses?) who designed the new-look AMTIX! — with its coloured 'accolade' pages etc..but I do have a few moans however:

1) I have written 4 letters (none published!) and have entered at least 20 comps — yes 20!! and I haven't won a thing.

2) I have owned a game called *One Man and his Droid* by **Mastertronic** for about 5 months, bought every issue of AMTIX! yet cannot see a review anywhere — yet you give tips for it!

3) The same applies to *Chukie Egg II*. I've had this for 4 months now, and no magazine has reviewed it, or even mentioned it. I know it is up to the companies to send you the games to review, so I think this is their fault! Don't they want their games reviewed?

As the tips you gave for *Finders Keepers*' in an earlier issue turned out to be tips for *Dynamite Dan*, I've enclosed a Map, and some tips for it, as well as some other top games.

Peter Rabbage, Dawlish, S Devon EX7 ODY

1) Considered yourself published. Keep entering the comps — you know it makes sense.
2) I'm sure it was reviewed a while back only I quite can't put my finger on it.
3) Are you sure CE II was on the Amstrad, I can't remember it — check for me would you please? Sorry about the mix up on the tips — I'll brolly them in art for you!
ST



HARDWARE SOFTY

Dear Saffron

Aghh! What happened to the hardware softy that used to appear in the back of AMTIX! I know the story finished and Cross finally died and everybody went back to earth, but couldn't we have another story? Stories like that lighten up a reader's mind (slightly) after reading all that Technorubbish! (nothing personal Tony!) We could have Lee, Tony and Richard as the heroes of the story (Lee could be the heroine), Crumbly as the evil dictator that rules over the AMTIX! offices and Auntie Aggie as the evil monster that does Crumbly's dirty work. The heroes would have to try and escape from the evil grip of the dictator and the AMTIX! offices. Crumbly is finally defeated by hooking him up to a CPC6128 as a joystick and loses his head because he wasn't compatible and Auntie Aggie loses her temper on his neck (the stick). What a horrible way for Crumbly to die you say, never mind, I'm sure nobody will miss him!

Yours, Matthew Huntington, Windermere, Cumbria

PS Apart from Crumbly the mag is brill!!!

PPS Why does everyone call him Crumbly!

I'm sure the Junkies would love it. We call him Crumbly because a cup of tea is too wet without him. Satisfied? Good. Oh by the way he's read your letter and is making all kinds of threats against your person. I've hidden your full address so you're safe from his terrible wrath.
ST

FROM A FELLOW SPIKY PERSON . . .

Dear Saffron

Hello. And hello to all the rest of the gang at AMTIX! Towers. Especially all with spikey hair — I am also one of the clan.

Now down to business (yawn). Is there any more news of LM yet? My mate (ZZAP! reader) says he has seen an ad for it. Do we get first iss with Christmas AMTIX!? (Bit of a silly question now).

Secondly, please please PLEASE bring back the old logo! I know you like it, but the mag just doesn't look the same with it (although this won't stop me buying it (of course).

Oi! You Mr nasty person! I don't really care what hair style you have (whamies make me puke too), but I (and hopefully some other readers, too) am sick of the UTTER load of bullshit you spout. And leave off this nice Saffron person (subtle!) — aren't concrete swimming accessories a bit out of date now, anyway? I thought steel designer straight jackets were in.

Well, that's enough for now. Keep up the good work (and the spikey haircuts). Oh and Merry Christmas and good luck in the New Year (not that you need it).

Duncan 'DUNX and I'm proud of it' Ball, Malvern Link, Worcs

PS My girlfriend goes to Ludlow College, so I might be up there sometime. Mind if I drop in?

PPS What's all this about monkey boots and suspenders? Can I have a poster of the gang? Or at least some signed photos?

PPPS (Phew) Any hints on hair care? What do you use to spike it? Have you had enough? Who are these men in white coats? etc.....

Super dooper — a fellow spikey! Mass, Rich and my good self are well pleased! Here's the news of LM — it's on the back of this mega issue of AMTIX! Leave the logo alone, it's in tears! Actually Mr Nasty (Aka P Thompson) isn't such a bad guy — he's just misunderstood. Of course you can come and see us at any time — just ring first. As for the poster, take a look at the mega challenge pic — just ignore the ZZAP! and CRASH primadonnas. If you want it autographed cut it out and send it into me and I'll sort it out for you. Hair care? We all use styling moose and conditioner with the traditional Boots own brand hairspray (Firm hold, unperfumed) — you're not a spiky without it!
ST

AS IF BY MAGIC, A LETTER APPEARED

Dear Thingy

No doubt you will take offence at being called this but all I can say is I have forgotten your name (yes, honestly!) any way offence is better than at all, get it?

Probably not. Anyway now to get to the point of this letter. I was watching television last night and an advert came on for the post office and I thought — yes really — wot a shame not to use the postal service so here your are.

Yours sincerely, Anon. (wouldn't you be!)

PS The price of Magik is too easy to solve but still a good game.

Well done, use your postal service — but how about a letter on computers next time? Well, I couldn't solve *Heavy On The Magick* for a long time so there!
ST

WE LOVE YOU!

Dear AMTIX!

In my opinion I think your magazine has just 'topped' the opposition. Until now I thought AMTIX! was a close 2nd with he AA (that well known motoring group) a few steps ahead. Now I think yours is the magazine in front. This is, in my opinion, because of one thing only and that is the previews section, it's GREAT! Far and away it is the most exciting part of the magazine.

AA on the other hand have a previews section once in a while with only a couple of games previewed.

I am also pleased you bought forward the release date of the magazine. Keep up the good work.

A J Pritchard. Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon.

Someone from my part of the country — how are you? Fine? Great. Oh, you flatter us — lots more blushing.
ST

THE £10 BET

Dear OTS

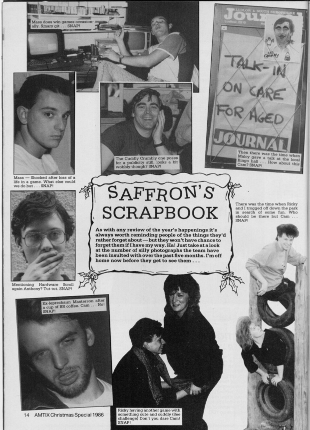
Could you tell me are there any plans to release *BC's Quest for tyres*. Also, I noticed in your charts you said *Spindizzy* was published by **Activision**, when it is published by **Electric Dreams**. And PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE could you print this letter, for I have £10 on the line (my software money). Oh by the way your magazine is brilliant.

Yours sincerely, Simon Williams. Birkenhead, Merseyside.

I'm afraid that *BC's Quest For Tyres* isn't going to be released — it wasn't much good anyway. Well, Activision and 'Leccy Dreams are near enough the same company — just. There we go — you can keep your £10 now unless you'd like to split it with me.
ST

THAT'S YER LOT

Oooh, working late nights never do you any good. 10.15 pm and all the team is still here in AMTIX! Towers. Well, the mag must get written I suppose. Right then, hope you all have a well great 'n' mega Christmas and Santa brings you lots of lovverly games for you to get high scores on — the scoreboard is awaiting to be filled. I'm off home now. Sue, my best pal, is getting fed up waiting for me, so I suppose I had better go. Cheerio and bye until next year. Letters, as always to: SAFFY TREVASKIS, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.



Mass does win games occasionally. Smary git . . . SNAP!

The Cuddly Crumbly one poses for a publicity still, looks a bit wobbly though? SNAP!

Then there was the time when Malcy gave a talk at the local Bingo hall . . . How about this Cam? SNAP!

Mass — Shocked after loss of a life in a game. What else could we do but . . . SNAP!

SAFFRON'S SCRAPBOOK

As with any review of the year's happenings it's always worth reminding people of the things they'd rather forget about — but they won't have chance to forget them if I have my way. Ha! Just take at a look at the number of silly photographs the team have been insulted with over the past five months. I'm off home now before they get to see them . . .

There was the time when Ricky and I trogged off down the park in search of some fun. Who should be there but Cam . . . SNAP!

Mentioning Hardware Scroll again Anthony? Tut tut. SNAP!

Ex-leprechaun Masterson after a cup of BR coffee. Cam . . . No! SNAP!

Ricky having another game with something cute and cuddly (See challenge) Don't you dare Cam! SNAP!



FIRELORD

Hewsons, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

The path wove deeper through the forest, beckoning Sir Galaheart further into the flickering shadows. A voice spoke out in the dimming gloom.

"My son, you have returned to this land of Torot to discover it's hidden secrets. You must seek out the sacred Firestone and return it to the Dragon's safe keeping".

As the intending *Firelord*, Galaheart must use all his skill, cunning and firepower to save his land from the treachery of the evil Queen. Having tricked the dragon into parting with the Firestone, the malicious Queen is now terrorising the populus with deadly fireballs. At one time the people roamed freely but now they cower in their homes. Her price for the release of the Firestone, is for some brave warrior to win for her the four charms of eternal youth. This task has fallen to Galaheart.

You control Galaheart in his quest to collect these elements and take them to the Queen, but your task is not a simple one. The streets are not as deserted as they first seemed, for although there are no people, ghostly apparitions now wander around. So your first task is to protect yourself, for this you must find an enchanted crystal to acquire firepower. As you make your way around zapping the ghosties, you will notice that your energy gets rather low. This can be replenished by picking up items of food such as sacks of corn or bushels of wheat that you may come across. Other objects you may find can be used to barter with. To aid you on your travels there are sign posts directing you to the various locations.

Trading can be done with a host of different people; the Peasants, Gatekeeper, Herbalist, Witches and Wizards, Knights, Wise Old Man, and the Bishop. All of them can supply you with helpful objects. If you don't want to barter, then why not steal from them? Most of them are easily cheated, but the Bishop tends to be quick and his justice is swift. If caught, a screen appears with a cursor rapidly moving between the words Innocent and Guilty. You must choose when to stop the cursor — if it stops on Guilty you lose one of your three lives. You have to go through this ordeal three times and if thrice guilty you've had it matey - end of game!

Anthony — CRITICISM

I am afraid FIRELORD didn't appeal to me much, the idea of running around a maze that covers several screens went out with SABRE WULF, even if this one has been jazzed up by including puzzles. The thing I did enjoy about the game was the way you could steal from the villagers, and consequently be put on trial if you were caught. Besides this I found very little to keep me going for long.

Richard — CRITICISM

There hasn't been a decent arcade adventure on the Amstrad for quite some time — at least none that have something special going for them. What FIRELORD has going for it, is one massive maze with great intermission sections, such as the trading one, and if you're feeling a bit naughty you can pinch things too — great! The graphics have been designed superbly, with the definition making each small detail really stand out. Although the graphics are all done in mode one, they don't appear to suffer greatly — green for the leaves and red for the trees (it's logical and it works quite well too). This is by no means going to be an easy game to solve — a fair bit of mapping and puzzles have to be solved, but it gives great satisfaction when you've completed it.

Mass — CRITICISM

Who said crime doesn't pay? Well it does here, that is when you've mastered the technique. Once proficient at this art I found I could get near enough whatever I wanted with a minimum of trouble. Getting caught can prove quite hairy though. The game on the whole is very playable with neat graphics and nice touches, such as the sign posts to help you if you get lost. Wandering around can also prove hairy as you're constantly hassled by the ghosties. I found it easier to 'alf-inch a Timescape spell off some poor unsuspecting sod. FIRELORD is an excellent game with great appeal — especially for all you petty larcenists out there. Buy it — it's a steal!

Get zapping them ghosties you brave knight you, but what's this? I wonder who he'll find in here?

Galaheart has a choice in the Witch's house — whether to barter with her or to steal from her. Decisions, decisions.

PRESENTATION 80%
Very informative without giving too much away.

GRAPHICS 88%
Superbly defined, lots of character.

SOUND 35%
No tune, meagre spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 89%
Simple enough to get into . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 85%
. . . but a great deal to master.

VALUE FOR MONEY 84%
Lots of maze for your money.

OVERALL 88%
A great little arcade adventure that proves a lot of fun.

MGT

Loriciels, £9.95 cass, joystick only

Falling attendances and plain bad football aren't problems which bother this Crystal Palace. The once grand castle of never-ending delights is no more. Ice has seeped in through every last crack, making the whole temple a slithery domain.

The saving factor for anyone who fancies a wander through the corridors, is a centrally heated bumper car known as Magnettle. Magnettle is dropped ungraciously into the first room and left to its own initiative to get around.

Mass — CRITICISM

We received this game with no instructions whatsoever, and I can honestly say that I had hours of fun wandering round not having a clue what to do. The game is superb in the way your little tank thingy follows every law of inertia I can think of, its movements on the ice blocks are also very true to life. The puzzles in the various rooms are ingenious, what with certain blocks rising when you shoot them, and platforms to skim across the electrified floors. The graphics are excellent. There is no tune and not a lot of FX but who cares? It's a great game!!

Magnettle is not your run-of-the mill tank, she is air powered. Jets on each of her four sides determine the way in which she manoeuvres her graceful body. Magnettle holds her powers very well — to such an extent that inertia carries her on even when the controlling joystick is released. Unguarded doors provide passages to the more obvious rooms, the screen then flicks from one location to another. The extreme cold has had a few nasty side effects — the most prominent being massive slabs of ice which usually do their best to get in the way of your Magnetic Tank. Launch pads can occasionally be found to get over that problem, they take the shape of white crossed squares. Travel onto them and press fire and your MGT will levitate into the air — releasing fire will let MGT drop but you can now manoeuvre her in mid-flight. This function allows you to reach blocks or entrances that are just a bit too high.

Life is not all slipping around with MGT, there are many distractions lurking in the various rooms. Most noticeable are the laser beams which span the entire height of a single room. These move about in preset patterns and colliding with these will obliterate MGT into a multitude of colourful atoms. Other hazards include bouncing squidges which won't kill you outright, but will seriously deplete your energy — measured by a gradually depleting MGT logo at the bottom left hand corner of the screen.

Scattered around the rooms are passes which enable you to pass through closed doors, to pick these up MGT must shoot at them. These will only work as long as the pass matches the sign above the door. MGT must hurtle around the rooms at break-neck speed until she reaches her legendary destination — the room of enlightenment where the secret of the crystal palace will be revealed.

MGT enters an icy room, but the square sproingers are there to reap her energy.

On the elevation pad, up onto the ice but the door is closed and you haven't got the pass! Calamity!

Anthony — CRITICISM

This is one game I could play for hours. The graphics are brilliant, the sound just right, and the gameplay amazing. Very little else to say really. The game is very atmospheric and although we had no instructions or scenario it was very easy to get into. As a matter of fact I think the game was improved by us not having a clue what we had to do — just pick it up as you go along. Go out and get it quick as the local shop is sure to run out.

Richard — CRITICISM

This is a very strange game — but nevertheless it is very good. It would appear that it has been designed by a perfectionist — the graphics are very slick, and animated extremely well. The movement with the inertia seems so realistic that I can't fault it in the slightest. There's a great number of puzzles to be solved, but none of them so hard that you end up getting frustrated. Although I was never quite sure what I was supposed to be doing, I enjoyed it immensely and it's such a good game that I would urge everyone to take a close look at it.

PRESENTATION 82%
Very slick and professional.

GRAPHICS 93%
Superb choice of colours — well designed.

SOUND 76%
Tune's fine. FX are a bit annoying.

PLAYABILITY 86%
/Might appear a bit fiddly, but easy enough.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 82%
Lots to see and do through the winter months.

VALUE FOR MONEY 80%
Fair enough for what it offers.

OVERALL 87%
A great original game from Loriciels.



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4
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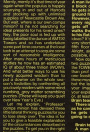


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THE SPECIAL KEEP THE KIDS QUIET FOR XMAS COMP

Ten chances to win the complete AMTIX! outfit T Shirts and Caps for the runners up

AMTIX! COMPETITION



Merrily, merrily it's that time of year again when the populus is happily scurrying in and out of Harrods and stocking up with unlimited supplies of Newcastle Brown Ale. But wait, where is our own comps minion? Is he not searching for ideal presents for his loved ones? Ney, the poor soul is fed up with being labelled the dunce of AMTIX! Towers and so has undertaken some part time courses at the local tech in an attempt to acquire some sort of reasonable intelligence. After many hours of meticulous studies he now has an estimated IQ of about three trillion (WOW!). And what better ways to use his newly acquired wisdom than to put a downer on the whole season's festivities by confronting all you lovely readers with some mind numbing, grey matter scrambling puzzles. (These will keep you quiet over New Year's Eve.)

Let me explain, 'Professor' comps minion has devised three little lateral thinking puzzles for you to lose sleep over. The idea is for you to give a feasible explanation of the circumstances described in the puzzles. To get you in the right frame of mind here is an example:

A man lives on the tenth floor of a block of flats. Every morning he gets in the lift, gets off at the ground floor and goes to work. However, when he comes home every night he gets in the lift, gets off at the fifth floor and walks the remaining five floors to his flat. Explain. Well folks, any ideas? It's easy really. The man is very short and can only reach the fifth floor button. Get the gist? Alright, alright so it's silly but it's possible, isn't it?

Now down to business, the first two puzzles were found, by us at the TOWERS of lesser intelligence than prof comps minion, to have one feasible explanation each so these must be answered correctly, but the last of the three is left to your imagination. All the same your explanation must be feasible or, at least, very entertaining.

Brain teaser 1

There is a man heading as fast as he can towards a field, when he gets there he knows he's going to die. EXPLAIN.

Brain teaser 2

A man is found hung by the neck in a large empty room. Underneath him is a pool of water. The ceiling is too high to be reached by hand or by jumping. How did he kill himself?

Brain teaser 3

Cleopatra is lying dead in a shallow pool of water, Anthony is standing over her. Anthony killed Cleopatra by indirectly suffocating her. EXPLAIN. (Don't be confused by the names).

Well brain boxes, there they are. What do you think, easy? I hope not. But what do you get in exchange for exhausting a couple of million brain cells I hear you ask.

Well the first 10 correct entries will win the complete AMTIX! collection, namely a sweatshirt, T Shirt, cap, and a binder. The next 10 will receive a T shirt and the next 10 a Cap, so please remember to include your T Shirt size on your entry so we can send your prize to you. Right get thinking and send your entries to: **Lateral Thinking Competition, AMTIX! Towers, P O Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB. You have until January 8.**

AMTIX! Christmas Special

Z

Rino, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Z is an unknown alien world, shrouded in death. Why you are here in a sleek spacefighter is difficult to understand, but what is apparent is that the inhabitants of this world are not too pleased to see you. Each one is hellbent on killing you and find the loss of their own lives a small sacrifice as long as they do you some damage first. The only thing to do is escape through the Hyperspace portals located on each section of the planet, but each is defended by a deadly laser shield that must be breached before you can continue on your fight for life.

The game is played on a scrolling landscape, with, at its centre, a boxed area containing a ship that looks similar to yours. At the top of the box is a moving shield which must be breached before you can get into the box and so move on to the next level. The shield is made of tougher stuff than the aliens and can only be damaged by energy bombs that must be collected. Every time you shoot ten aliens an energy bomb will appear. This must first be shot to deactivate its defensive shield and then collected. A total of five bombs may be collected at one time and once one is obtained you must fly to the box, aim the ship at the shield and press the space bar.

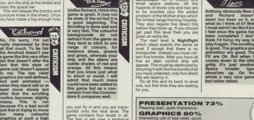
This will release the bombs and puncture holes in the shield. Once you have made a big enough hole you just fly in and you are transported onto the next level. The game contains four levels in all. The first is set over a technical centre and contains only the lower forms of alien which are both easy to hit and take little energy from the ship should it collide with one.

The second level is set in the **Countryside Battle Zone**. It is played in exactly the same way as the first level but also contains the Saucims. These shoot missiles randomly in all directions but if you should stray into the stream then the ship will lose a lot of energy.

The third level is set on a **Lunar Landscape**, full of craters and small space stations. All the hazards of levels one and two are to be avoided plus the added problem of the Mother ships which fire limited range homing missiles. They also require five direct hits before they blow up. If you should get past this level then you are given an extra life.

The next level is **Nightflight** which plays exactly the same as level 3 except that there is no transporter. Instead you must collect five bombs. After you have all five an alien control ship will appear. This must be destroyed by shooting it with the five bombs that you have collected, only five direct hits will destroy it.

Do all this and its back to level one, but this time they are waiting for you.



Richard — CRITICISM

No, I'm sorry, I'm not really impressed by this all that much. To be fair the Amstrad doesn't see a game like this very often but that doesn't alter the fact that this style of game just doesn't appeal to me. The bas relief graphics are well defined, and well animated — when they stand still or at least move slowly but after that the scrolling routine becomes slightly messy. This is not because it's a bad scroll just that in trying to move too many colourful graphics at such a high speed it loses it's clarity. Okay, so things do blur when moving at high speed, but my point is that you just don't appreciate it as much. For an Amstrad this is very early days in this type of game. It's not a bad start, but it's far too early to begin saying that this is state of the art — things will improve, mark my words.

Anthony — CRITICISM

Unlike Richard, I think this game is great. It may not be state of the art but it is a good beginning. The Scrolling is done well and is very fast. The colourful backgrounds do not detract from the game as they tend to stick to one range of colours, for instance blues, greens and greys, whereas your ship and the aliens are subtle shades of red and orange. All this means that you know just what to shoot or avoid. I will admit that much more could have been added to this game but as a conversion from the Commodore it compares well.

Mass — CRITICISM

Anthony obviously likes Z and Richard doesn't seem too keen on it, so what do I think of it? Well I must admit I do like it but I feel once the game has been completed I don't think I'd force my way to play it again. The scrolling is good. The graphics and animation are good. The FX are Ok. But when it comes down to the nitty gritty it's just another Space Invader type shoot'em up. On the whole a very nice game but rather dated.

PRESENTATION 73%
Pleasing start, quite impressive.

GRAPHICS 80%
Interesting use of bas-relief, good.

SOUND 67%
No tune, few mediocre bleeps and burps.

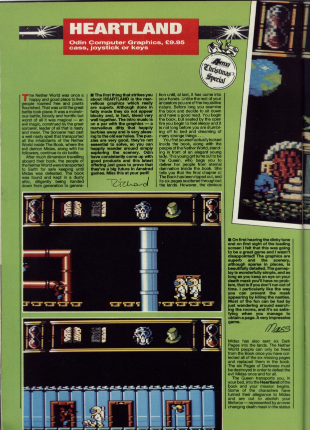
PLAYABILITY 72%
Once you've got the hang of it . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 70%
. . . it won't be long before it's finished.

VALUE FOR MONEY 71%
A fair price for what it offers.

OVERALL 75%
The beginning of a new genre for the Amstrad.

AMTIX Christmas Special



HEARTLAND

Odin Computer Graphics, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

The Nether World was once a happy and good place to live, people roamed free and plants flourished. That was until the great battle took place. It was a monstrous battle, bloody and horrific but worst of all it was magical — an evil magic, construed by the great sorcerer, leader of all that is nasty and mean. The Sorcerer had cast a well nasty spell that transported all the inhabitants of the Nether World inside The Book, where the evil demon Midas, along with his followers, continue to do battle.

After much dimension travelling aboard their book, the people of the Nether World were transported to Earth for safe keeping until Midas was defeated. The book was found and kept in a dusty attic, diligently being handed down from generation to generation until, at last, it has come into your hands. Unlike the rest of your ancestors you are of the inquisitive nature. Before long you examine the book and decide to sit down and have a good read. You begin the book, but seated by the open fire you begin to feel sleepy and it is not long before you are stumbling off to bed and dreaming of many strange things . . .

You find yourself actually locked inside the book, along with the people of the Nether World, standing in front of an elegant young lady. This young girl turns out to be the Queen, who begs you to deliver her people from eternal damnation inside the book. She tells you that the final chapter of The Book has been ripped out, and its six pages scattered throughout the lands. However, the devious Midas has also sent six Dark Pages into the lands. The Nether World people can only be freed from the Book once you have collected all of the six missing pages and replaced them in the book. The six Pages of Darkness must be destroyed in order to defeat the evil Midas once and for all.

The Queen transports you, in your bed, into the **Heartland** of the book and your mission begins. Some of the characters have turned their allegiance to Midas and are out to abolish your lifeforce — represented by an ever changing death mask in the status

■ The first thing that strikes you about HEARTLAND is the marvellous graphics which really are superb. Although done in fatty mode they do not appear blocky and, in fact, blend very well together. The intro music is on a par with the graphics — a marvellous ditty that happily burbles away and is very pleasing to the old ear holes. The puzzles are very good, they're not essential to solve, so you can happily wander around simply exploring the scenery. Odin have consistently come up with good products and this latest offering just goes to prove that they've a big future in Amstrad games. Miss this at your peril!

Richard

■ On first hearing the dinky tune and on first sight of the loading screen I felt that this was going to be a great game and I wasn't disappointed! The graphics are superb and the scenery, although sparse in places, is beautifully detailed. The gameplay is wonderfully simple, and as long as you keep an eye on your death mask you'll have no problem, that is if you don't run out of time. I particularly like the way you can prevent the mask appearing by killing the nasties. Most of the fun can be had by just wandering around searching the rooms, and it's so satisfying when you manage to obtain a page. A very impressive game.

Mass



section. This diminishes if you're doing well, or grows if you're not. Travelling through Heartland is done on foot, so you'll have to watch out for the holes which lead to certain death. Throughout Heartland things float around willy-nilly, and providing you're facing either left or right, you can jump into the air to catch them. You may also travel through doors which lead in and out of the current screen and the bed permits travel between the many lands of Heartland.

Weapons may be picked up, as and when you need them. There are three different varieties; firstly the top hat (this is the least powerful of the three and it will take three hits to kill any oncoming foe), secondly there's the knives (these are slightly more powerful than the top hat but still take two hits to annihilate the nasties), finally there's the fireballs — your most powerful weapon of all (one hit is all you need with this one kiddies).

Spells can be found floating in the air, they take several forms, and each has its own functions. Bubbly spells are helpful as they boost your lifeforce, starry spells on the other hand, diminish it. Blue sparkle spells render you invulnerable to the attacking hordes, however, for the limited time that you are invulnerable, you will remain unable to pick up any objects. To begin the quest you must first find a book which floats about on a screen near to the one you start on, after that trot on up the stairs in search of the first of the six pages. But which is it? is it a good one that will save the people of the Nether World, or an evil one devised by Midas? I wonder . . .

■ **This is a game that should capture the imagination of everyone. The whole game has oodles of atmosphere, the loading screen and title music are first rate, and the gameplay is second to none. The best thing about HEARTLAND is that everyone should be able to complete the first level within a few games, but should find the levels getting progressively more difficult, a great incentive to keep playing the game. The backdrop changes from the garden to the moonbase, castle etc, making the whole thing a joy to play. Play it on Christmas day instead of watching Willy Wonka's chocolate factory as the whole thing is just as much fun.**

Anthony

PRESENTATION 92%
Great intro music and screen.

GRAPHICS 94%
Superbly detailed and animated characters.

SOUND 93%
Marvellous tune and neat FX.

PLAYABILITY 92%
Easy to get your teeth into . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 92%
. . . but the puzzles will take some solving.

VALUE FOR MONEY 90%
One game that is really worth ten quid.

OVERALL 93%
Another superb release from Odin!



TIME TRAX

Mind Games, £9.95 cass, joystick and keys

Pheweee! All this searching and tramping around is enough to give any one a headache. Never mind, must make trax!

Holocausts are, quite honestly, unpleasant things — no, damn it, they're down right horrible and nasty and should be avoided at all costs. Luckily you've managed to avoid it quite well, down in your little cellar with your baked beans and similar supplies of nourishment. Something incredibly disastrous has happened, the holocaust has blown open the portals in space and time and they must be carefully sealed or else chaos will reign throughout the four dimensions. To achieve this you will need to pacify the Eight Minds by returning their character items to them and in so doing seal the portals through time by casting the correct spell.

Beginning in your living room you must locate a weapon, after all you can hardly be expected to wander through time totally unguarded, search every nook and cranny — you know behind the sofa, in the bins and all over the shop until you have a suitable weapon. With a weapon suitably located about your person you can then proceed through the rigours of time travel and all that it entails.

Richard — CRITICISM

I'm afraid I'm not keen on this at all. Right from the outset I knew I wasn't going to like it. The instruction manual is far to big and unnecessarily tedious, and the scenario is so uninteresting to read I found myself skipping chunks simply because I lost interest. I didn't particularly enjoy the actual game either, the search process became very monotonous after only a short time and did not encourage me to get into the game any further. Some people, if they can appreciate its qualities, may find it interesting but it gets a big no-go from me.

You will find yourself transported to several different locations, each with their own characteristic landscaping graphics — each one means the same sort of procedure, tramping around searching this and that and going through all sorts of oddments.

In order to complete your quest you must find the specific objects which will appease the Minds. These objects consists of a dagger, a helmet, a skull, an emerald scarab, book, a clay doll, a map and a battle axe. Once you have given these objects to one of the Minds it will cheer him up and he will reward you with a couple of runes. There are 15 runes in all, but only 10 can be carried at any one time, and they must be correctly assembled in a certain pattern. Scrolls can be located which will aid you in the orientation of the runes, they will also assist in telling how close you are to having the correct positioning.

Your character is quite an agile sort of chap really, he can wander left and right and clamber up and down ladders as he wishes. With a little bit of concentration he can also leap in several directions, fire with whatever weapon he has at that time, or enter an options menu. This provides facilities to search, pick up, put down, use, hold or haggle with any of the Minds that you may meet.

There are three screens to each time zone which you can wander around quite happily through the doors which litter the place. Travelling between the various time zones is somewhat more difficult as you will either have to cast a spell, which means using up a precious rune or wait until such a time that the portal appears. These turn up at regular intervals so as long as you're in the right place then everything will be okey dokey with no more nasty holocausts to worry about, well, at least not for the time being . . .

Mass — CRITICISM

If you are to play this one make sure your brains in memory mode because there's a hell of a lot to memorise before you even start. I constantly found myself having to pause the game and flick through the instruction booklet every time I found something, just to see what could be done with it. There is also a huge amount of time consuming searching to be done which isn't made easy by having to flick through the menu every other step. I like the idea of having time portals appearing at specific times but I found that if you don't watch the timer you could accidentally walk into one, not very helpful. I suppose the longer you play the easier it will become, but myself, I lost interest in the early stages.

Anthony — CRITICISM

TIME TRAX has been well thought out but I didn't really find it addictive. It takes to long to get back to where you were after being killed. The music gives the whole thing a great feeling of urgency but progress is anything but fast. There is no reward for successfully finding a rune, you could have gained an extra amount of energy or there could have been some visual recognition, but no, you just plod on and collect the next. I'm afraid this is one for only the most dogged of strategy followers. For me it's just one big bore.

PRESENTATION 65%
Long winded instruction book, boring scenario.

GRAPHICS 78%
Nice N'Pretty, rather cluttered.

SOUND 60%
The tune is initially fun but tends to be tedious after a while.

PLAYABILITY 58%
Far too much for a mere mortal to take in.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 50%
It'll keep you going for a long long long long long ....

VALUE FOR MONEY 71%
. . . long long long long time!

OVERALL 65%
A great deal of content, but a lack of action.



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ZOMBI

UBI Soft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

'What's our fuel like?' 'Not too good! If we don't find a place to land soon, we'll have to walk.'

Looking down into the woods, shapes are visible moving inexorably toward the few jacketed men carrying hunting guns. Each of these is trying to defend himself against the onslaught of disfigured sub-humans.

'Damn Rednecks! They're probably enjoying this whole thing. It's just one big hunting trip to them.'

Several minutes go by, the woods change into grasslands and fields.

'What's that?!' shouts Sylvie suddenly. There in the distance is a large building, with giant carparks and a seemingly unbroken perimeter fence.

'We could land on the roof and take a look around.'

Within minutes the 'copter gently touches down on the roof of the shopping centre. The sudden burst of activity alerts the Zombies in the car-park who, with swift deliberate movements, head straight for the store entrance.

'No way!' exclaimed Patrick 'Let's get out of here before they make it up onto the roof.'

'It's alright.' said Alexander calmly. 'If there was a way up they would have been here already. Let's take a look around and see if we can find some fuel or food, in fact anything that can help us once we get upstate.'

Stealthily you make your way through a skylight and down several flights of stairs until you come to a locked door.

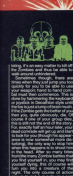
'That's why there are none of those things abou . . . ', from behind there is a howl and you are knocked to the ground. Patrick swiftly draws his gun and aims it straight at the head of what must once have been a maintenance worker. Congealed blood, bone and brain all spurt from the front of the falling creature's face. As you look at the motionless body, memories of your childhood flood back and your mother's words stick in your mind. 'When there is no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth . . . '

Zombi puts you in charge of four people who have just landed on top of a large shopping centre. Desperately low on fuel and food, you all decide to try and take over the store and use it as a base until you can get some fuel. You need this fuel to take you to the only safe place you know, which is located a long way from your current position. You can loot the shops to gain weapons and food while trying to avoid the numerous Zombies that are scattered around the whole centre. If you have a gun, an axe or something equally devas-

■ ZOMBI has an atmosphere that will have you believing that you're really there. The whole thing is so well thought out that you readily get very involved in it. I think that my view of the game benefitted by my seeing the film, Zombies — dawn of the Dead first, and I recommend that if you can get hold the of the video, do the same. The icon system was at first a little confusing but, once mastered, it adds greatly to the game due to its great speed. Speed is very important as the whole thing is played in realtime. Now I must get back to the game, Sylvie is just trying to lop the head off a passing Zombie with that axe of hers. Great fun!

Anthony

The helicopter; from whence your mission begins - and where you must return.



tating, it's an easy matter to kill off the Zombies and thus be able to walk around unhindered.

Sometimes though, there are times when they just jump you too quickly for you to be able to use your weapon; hand to hand combat must then commence. This is done by hammering the keyboard or joystick in Decathlon style until the foe is just a lump of brain mush. If the Zombie gets the better of you then you, quite obviously, die. Of course if one of your group dies, this is still not the end of the story. For, exactly half an hour later, your dead comrade will get up and start to look for you (though his appearance is now somewhat more disturbing), the only way to stop him when this happens is to shoot him in the head. After so many bites from the many Zombie battles that you find yourself in, you may find yourself dying, this of course will turn you into a creature of the night. The only course of action now is to put a gun to your own head and blast away, if you don't do it one of your 'friends' is going to anyway!

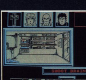
All of these dead bodies that you leave in your wake have only one objective — to develop a firm rigor mortis and decay the day away. To stop things getting too smelly, the best thing to do is collect all the human debris and dump it in the deep freeze with the pork.

Of course all of this is a little to easy for a hero such as you. So to make things a little more difficult, there is an added problem. A chapter of Hells Angels have spotted your helicopter on the roof and have had the same idea as you about the shopping centre being a good place to hide out. They now begin to make their plans on how they are going to get in, and in turn put you out. One redeeming feature of this event is that the bikers have the much needed fuel that you want, so all your merry band have to do is to take on a hundred or so very well built, mean, hungry and homocidal maniac bikers — a piece of cake!

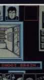
An icon system is used to control the characters, and by manipulation of the many symbols you can create quite complicated commands. A visual representation of all locations is shown on the left hand side of the screen, while on the right is a portrait of the currently controlled character and their current status, strength, food and health.

The movement pattern is quite strange as you must select the movement icon, and you are presented by a three dimensional box. Picking any one of the six sides will move you in that direction if that is possible.

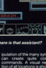
Failure in your mission presents you with a great end screen that shows the four characters as Zombies with a giant skull in the background, but surely it's not worth dying just to see that!

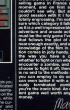


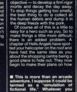
Down in the hi-fi shop, now where is that assistant?





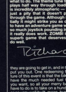






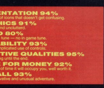
■ This is more than an arcade adventure. I suppose it could be termed as a 'simulation of fictional life.' Whatever you decide to label it, it sure is one hell of a game. Up front it can look a bit daunting, as there are so many icons to use and characters to control, but, due to the immaculate presentation, you are left in no doubt as to what to do. The theme tune that plays half way through loading is incredibly atmospheric — it's just a pity that it doesn't play through the game. Although initially it might strike you as odd to have an adventure game with so much joystick pounding in it, it really does work. ZOMBI is a superb game that deserves to do well.





■ ZOMBI, we are told is the best selling game in France at the moment, and on first sight I couldn't see why. But after a good session with it I found it totally engrossing. I'm not quite sure which category it falls into, as it is a well impressive blend of adventure and arcade action. It must be the only game I've seen that follows the plot of a film near enough exactly, and a good knowledge of the film in question comes in jolly handy. I love the way you have a choice whether to fight or run when you encounter a zombie, and if you choose to fight it off, then there is no end to the methods which you can employ to do so. You can even batter it with a previously terminated zombie if you're the ironic kind. An excellent game well worth anyone's money.

Mass







SEPULCRI

Ariolasoft, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk



That cute little robot just doesn't give up. Pictured here preparing to take a flying leap from the uppermost door, he'll be okay as long as he avoids the spikeys!





Poor little dear, doesn't know which way to turn with five exits to choose from. But he's still smiling.

In the year 2075 the first Strategic Defence Initiative Satellite was constructed but being in its provisional stage of development it was found that it could not be tested without starting the war it was designed to prevent. This was beginning to be a rather large problem until some bright spark down at the space department decided that they would put a robot inside the works. This was no ordinary robot for it was incredibly small enabling it to run around inside the satellite and examine all the circuit boards and components. To add to the problems one of the more stupid technicians at the space department miniaturised some male sheep and put them in the works instead of the more conventional RAM. These, although seemingly lifeless, will destroy our poor little mechanised buddy. To add further to the many problems our hero has many sensors in his feet so if he lands on anything sharp he will self destruct.

Once a defect is located in the satellite our little robot must signal to the outside controllers. This is done by jumping on one of fifty dip switches to be found in the works. After all this is completed he must then make his way to the second part, the ROTTES (Ridiculously Over The Top Exit Security). The security people at the space department, being the suspicious persons they are, are determined that little robot must send his highly top secret exit code to the controllers. There are ten 'code posts' which our hero has to change to spell out the words 'LETMEOUTOK'.

Guide your robot around the rooms jumping where necessary to land on the switches. When you land on a switch the screen will flash and the colour of the switch will change. Avoid anything that moves. You may stand on the integrated circuits but you find yourself sliding off some of them. Once you have found your way into the Rottes you will have to work out which is the first pillar on the left in order to spell out the code word. To change the letter on the pillar simply move closer to it, but not too close or you will suffer a somewhat sizzling million volt death. And after all that, just find the exit.

To make mapping easier there is a screen dumping facility, allowing you to print out the room on screen. (Amstrad and Epson printer compatible).

Good luck MINIBOTS you'll need it!

Anthony — CRITICISM

3D games are becoming a little old hat now, though there is still room for a good one. With SEPULCRI, Ariolasoft have produced an excellent version of an old concept. The whole thing reminded me very much of ALIEN 8, but doesn't have the impact that it had when it arrived two years ago. The tasks are all deceptively simple, just jump on the block to complete the screen but as usual you have to be very devious about how you go about doing it. Overall it's just a good version on a classic theme, and as such would have been better priced around the six pound mark.



Mass — CRITICISM

I'm not a great follower of 3D games, in fact I'm not a follower at all. But never the less SEPULCRI does have a certain affinity, with it's bright, well defined graphics and each room being a different colour. The task on the other hand sounds easier than it is. A lot of practice is needed if you wish to avoid landing on spiky objects especially as a run up is usually required. A nice game but unfortunately not one for me.

Richard — CRITICISM

No matter how many 3D games I see I still enjoy them and, although I wouldn't lash out the full nine quid for it, I'm quite happy to sit down and play it for what it is. The graphics are rather jolly, especially the cute little robot who has a marvellous expression on his face, er, front panel. As with any 3D game it'll bring you hours of fun once or twice, but unless you get hooked it's just another 3D game — albeit a good one at that.

PRESENTATION 80%
Witty scenario, nice demo.

GRAPHICS 85%
Well defined, very Ultimate-ish.

SOUND 60%
Too simple, but nice title tune.

PLAYABILITY 75%
Easy once you've got the hang of jumping!

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 55%
Not a lot to do, but not easily done.

VALUE FOR MONEY 65%
A little pricey.

OVERALL 68%
Just another 3D game with a little more.

ONE

Infogrames, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Cast your minds back, if you can, to the good old days of childhood and in particular to when your parents were out. Remember the babysitters? Remember all those nasty tricks you used to play on them? You didn't! Well now's your chance to make up for it.

You play the part of Valentin, the naughtiest of nippers, and as luck should have it your parents have gone away for the weekend. Unfortunately they have employed the services of Alfred Martinien, a rather short tempered babysitter, to look after you in their absence. Tiring with your toys and being the devious sort of chappy you are you decide that the only course of action left to you is to play practical jokes on the unsuspecting Alfred. Something that proves to be not as easy as it sounds.

Your house is a rather large one with thirty rooms and around these there are scattered various objects that can be used to play the practical jokes. Objects such as Banana skins that Alfred can slip on, Garden rakes that he walks into, Buckets of water, Balloons, Stones and Custard pies that can be thrown at him. The only problem is that once Alfred has fallen for one of your tricks he becomes red faced and very irate. He will then run around trying to find you and if he catches up with you, you're sure to get a good spanking. So the trick is not only setting up the practical jokes but making sure that you don't walk into them yourself, and don't get caught.

Once Valentin has found an object he puts it in one of his ten pockets and carries it around with him until he wishes to use it. If, on the other hand, he gets caught he seems to go into shock after the beating from Alfred and the only way he is able to move again is for him to drop all the objects in his possession. These will then disperse themselves around the rooms. The more intricate the practical joke the more points you score and also the longer Alfred stays angry at you. If you manage to stay away from Alfred, once he has walked into your traps, he soon calms down and forgets about it. This, of course, depends on how bad the joke was in the first place.

There are no limits to how deviously sneaky you can be, so go ahead and ruin Alfred's day!



That darling little child, Valentin, takes refuge in the kitchen from that nasty man who just won't stop chasing him!

Valentine has a mischievous gleam in his eye as he spots a ball, now, what can he do with that?

Mass — CRITICISM

One thing this game certainly isn't and that's dull. The graphics and animation are very colourful indeed and I just love the way Alfred's face turns bright red when he walks into one of the traps. The great beauty of this game is that you don't have any limitations on what you can do to poor old Alfred. Once the game has been played a few times you soon get used to what traps Alfred has fallen for by the points you receive, the trick is remembering where it was and from which direction Alfred will come. It's so satisfying when you know that one of your traps has been walked into. A really fun game for everyone!

Richard — CRITICISM

The standard of games that pour in from over the Channel is still high, and ONE only goes to prove that. It's original, it's challenging and, best of all, it's highly amusing. The tricks are only limited to your imagination and logical thought for that matter. If you enjoyed the kind of humour that made SPY vs SPY so popular then take a look at this, you won't regret it.

Anthony — CRITICISM

At first sight the idea of just running around trying to upset the babysitter may seem a little boring, but after a few games you become much more devious in your traps, and the fun increases proportionately. I don't really think that ONE compares too well with SPY v SPY but it is both amusing to watch as well as to play. The whole family could join in, each person thinking up the trap to try next.

PRESENTATION 68%
Frantic attack mode, generally good.

GRAPHICS 73%
Bright and beautiful.

SOUND 59%
No theme tune, few FX.

PLAYABILITY 79%
Being nasty is so much more fun.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 78%
The more devious you are, the longer you'll play.

VALUE FOR MONEY 74%
Would be better a few pounds cheaper.

OVERALL 77%
Naughty but nice!


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I've pinpointed key brand advantages, stressing the leisure-management strengths of Mosaic's new product offerings.
The Archers
In The Archers — The Computer Game you're the script editor on BBC Radio 4's long-running serial. Your decisions affect life in Ambridge — and your listening figures ... watch out for memos from Controller Radio 4! A clever and amusing illustrated text game by the utterly brilliant Level 9 team.
Twice Shy
Based on the best-selling Dick Francis thriller, this illustrated text adventure plunges you into the seamy side of the horse-racing world. The RamJam Corporation (ingenious things!) have written two games for the price of one: the racing simulation can be played independently and as a vital part of the adventure itself.
Dominic
AND THE ART DIRECTOR SEEKS TO APPEND COGENT VISUAL SUPPORT...
MEMO
Olly
I'm having creative block this week. Use the packshot — it's got horses on it.
Col
MEMO
Olly
Why don't we shoot Eddie Grundy and Jack Woolley feeding a blown-up packshot to some sheep? Don't forget the Beeb wants us to say 'By arrangement with the BBC' somewhere
Col
WE MUST MAKE THE CONSUMER AN ALLY, NOT A 'TARGET'
THE ARCHERS Witty, entertaining and programmed by Level 9.
TWICE SHY Dangerous action adventure — a new RamJam classic.
Available for Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad (The Archers also for Atari and MSX).
Cassettes £9.95. Disk versions coming soon.
MOSAIC PUBLISHING



PRODIGY

Electric Dreams, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

STOP PRESS: Synthetic man changes nappy!!!!

Amid much speculation and controversy it was revealed today that The Machine Sorcerer, Wardlock, has finally created organic life in his gigantic Mechlabs. The existence of intelligent fleshy forms was only theorised by some of the most powerful computers on our machine planet, but now it seems that all the speculation was well founded. When asked whether the new forms represented a threat to our world the Wardlock quite clearly said that his creations were securely locked inside his Mechlabs and would never make contact with the outside.

A tour of the Mechlabs revealed the security to be unsurpassed and any fears of escape are totally unfounded. The Good Sorcerer took us for a tour of his massive labs which are split into four sections, the ICE ZONE, VEGIE ZONE, TECH ZONE and FIRE ZONE. Bouncing around the Zones we witnessed some of the failed and less successful creations of the Wardlock, the eerie Globewels and less unsettling Bloberities, until finally at the most secure point in the lab we found the two latest arrivals. Both were of humanoid form, one named Nejo, a baby specimen who seemed to rely on a larger Syntleman, synthetic man, named Solo. The Wardlock told us that many more experiments would need to be carried out before any further developments could be made.

Found here was a extract that had fallen from Solo's diary: "How long I have been trapped in this nightmare I don't know, but now a new form has joined me in this prison maze the greater is the urgency that we escape. The new form is a baby who follows me everywhere, needing constant attention, feeding, showers and protection from the Wardlock's many failed experiments. To this purpose I have devised a way of escape. This is by feeding random data into the Wardlocks terminals and so disengaging the security system. I have also discovered that the door to the outside world can be opened using four power keys, placing each one within the lockfire. The teleport system has now become operational and should help us to get between the four zones and keep us a step or two ahead of the Wardlock. My handcrafted bubble gun is working well and although not powerful enough to harm the failed flesh experiments it gives them a little incentive to move away. Somehow we must escape into space and try to find other organic life forms before the Wardlock starts to experiment with us.."

The game starts with you controlling Solo with either the keys or joystick, in an **Ultimate**ish type game. You begin inside the Mechlabs with your young prodigy following behind. The screen shows a view of one of the Wardlocks, about which is shown the four security system indicators (the rotating cubes). At the top of the screen are three indicators showing the current state of Nejo's food, his nappy and Solo's oxygen supply. When these get low it is a good idea to get oxygen balloons which are scattered about the maze, take Nejo to a shower to clean his nappy or feed him with a bottle. The bottles have to be blasted out of the MechDonald chefs using the bubble gun.

Getting out is no simple affair as you must find Security units and take them to the Computer control centre and so facilitate Solo's escape.

Mass — CRITICISM

The graphics in PRODIGY are very good and the sound, how can I put it, is pleasantly different, but the game totally failed to interest me. It's probably not the first time I've said this, but there are very few 3D games that I've enjoyed playing and I'm sorry to say this isn't one of them. The idea behind the game is good but the way it has been executed leaves a lot to be desired. The game play is too slow, and dragging that wretched child around does nothing but hinder your progress. I don't like it!

Richard — CRITICISM

PRODIGY could have been an excellent game, great concept, appealing graphics and wierd sound. Unfortunately the vast concept is so intricate that it slows most of the action down. And I must agree with Anthony that it all that ruddy baby's fault, I mean if we didn't have that little pest toddling so slowly then it would be fine. There are a few neat sections to the maze, like the ice palace, where you tend to slide every where and the poor baby gets so confused. In all, if you fancy a 3D puzzle adventure then this might be worth checking out, but if you're in a racey mood then steer clear.

Anthony — CRITICISM

This game is hard, not because it is too fast, not because the monsters hassle you to death, and not because the maze is too difficult. It's becuse of that baby. Most of the time it refuses to act logically and just follow. Instead it bumps into walls or pushes you into monsters. The way that you speed back to the start of a section on touching an alien is quite unnerving at first due to the speed that you whizz back through the maze. Having said that the game is quite nice but not up to the standard of say the Ultimate 3D games which it has tried to recreate. Overall the best part of the game is the plot which seems to be have wasted on a very tacky game.

PRESENTATION 85%
Helpful instructions, both on inlay and screen.

GRAPHICS 85%
Excellent, well defined and carefully thought out.

SOUND 70%
Wierd, but a great introduction tune.

PLAYABILITY 66%
Difficulty caused by slow trailing baby.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 65%
You may be interested to finish the game.

VALUE FOR MONEY 59%
Little excitement for a tenner is a bit much.

OVERALL 68%
A great concept that doesn't work to the full..

NERVOUS MOMENTS FOR A SHROPSHIRE LAD

Winter is closing in fast here at AMTIX! Towers and our new adventure hero, ROB STEEL, is nervously standing in the sidelines waiting to reveal his first reviews. Rob resides in Shropshire and likes nothing better than whiling away the small hours of the night with a good adventure. Over to you Rob . . .

Yes, thank you very much, whoever you were! As Sean has departed to pastures new I have stepped into the void left by him. I will try not to get sucked down into the whirlpool too quickly but you will have to excuse me if I feel my way gently for a while. Enjoying a good adventure is one thing, writing about it is another matter entirely. Anyway space is at a premium in the mega Christmas special so I can only include two reviews, one about a wabbit, the other about a popular radio show! There got you guessing haven't I?

Any correspondence in future, whether it be home grown material, or contributions for Arcana, should be sent to me at AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

BUGSY

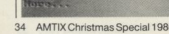
CRL, £7.95 cass

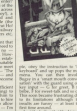


Adventures from the St Brides' School do not usually impress me. I always find myself loading their games with some trepidation. Their style of humour is either very childish — the Gulley Bull in *Very Big Cave Adventure* for example — or so obscure as to render me totally baffled.

Bugsy, I fear is no exception. Sub-titled — The struggle of one small rabbit to build a successful career in the fascinating world of organised crime, you play the role of Bugsy Maroon, a pale blue gangster type rabbit, who begins the game by being killed off!

However, as this is an adventure, Trixie, the well known cave adventuress, informs our brave bunny that it's no hardship to die in an adventure game and up scrolls the ''do you want to try again?'' message. Enter YES and off we go.





It's Chicago in 1922. You are in a street of sepia, outside Deviney's bar. Dare you enter? Moving around the streets of the windy city, Bugsy comes across paper boys (try buying boy!), a barber's shop with a red and white striped pole outside (the pole has just had his hair cut Ho! Ho! Ho!), a gunsmith's, railway station, theatrical costumers etc, etc.

It soon becomes apparent that to get on in the game you need to make a fast 'buck' (Oh no — they've got me at it now). However, trying to rob certain establishments without suitable hardware is a quick way to meet the local prison warden — 'The law swarms in like ants' — and it's back to the (soon to become tedious) restart sequence.

How can Bugsy get sufficient 'Doe' (sorry — it's catching) to buy the pistol to enable him to hold up the post office, or to hire up a costume perhaps to allow safe entry into Deviney's — I'm not saying.

The game is quilled and illustrated in colours which are reminscent of a pavement pizza after a rough night at the local Popadom Palace. The text only mode, though, is a comparitively soothing grey on black.

The vocabulary is small, what would you expect from a rabbit?, not recognising such traditional words as help, lift, push, pull, turn, insert, wave etc, and the phrase ''sorry kid, ya just stretched my vocabulary to bursting point'', appears much too often.

The game includes a ''great new menu-driven conversation system''. This allows the player to talk to any person who happens to be in his particular location. Type in ''Talk Guard'' for example, obey the instruction to 'hit keyboard' and up pops the mini menu. You can then involve Bugsy in a 'smart mouth conversation' with the guard using one key input — G for greet, B for bribe, F for sweet-talk and so on. This soon became frustrating due to its limitations although the insults are funny — at least the first time around.

I got the feeling that I had joined this adventure half way through and seemed to have missed some important plot points. It was very difficult to get anywhere (typical St Brides!) or to obtain any useful information from my surroundings, other characters, or the weak examine command.

I soon became disinterested in Bugsy's destiny and pulled the plug on him. To quote the game itself, ''See one, you've seen them all''.



Atmosphere	48%
Plot	45%
Interaction	28%
Lastability	39%
Value for Money	40%
Overall	41%

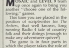
THE ARCHERS

Mosaic/Level 9



MOSAIC and **LEVEL 9** team up once again to bring you another "choose one of the following:" games.

This time you are placed in the position of scriptwriter for *The Archers*, that well known, long running Radio 4 tale of country folk and their doings (enough to make any adventurer quiver!)



The game is in four parts in which the player takes the role of either Jacki Wolley, Elizabeth Archer, Eddie Grundy or Nelson Gabriel. You then have to make decisions about particular situations from the three options given, in order to boost audience ratings sufficiently to gain access to the next part (1,000,000 in part one).

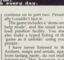
The inlay card contains the usual instructions and background, plus lots of info concerning the characters you may come across during your number-tapping exploits. Screen layout is typical **Level 9** — graphics occupying the top third with an option to turn them off (I soon did), and lots of scrolling text to inwardly digest.



After searching my innermost being to ensure selection of the correct option offered (and thinking "why is this in the adventure section?"), it did seem that, although I might choose a certain option to resolve a problem, (should I buy the shorts or stick to my trousers and braces for the yoga class?), the game could easily ignore me, and then plump for one of its own.

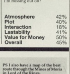
Every so often a memo from the dreaded controller of Radio 4 sneaks onto the screen. This informs you of the number of people who currently tune into your programme and, dependent on this figure, the controller either sends you best wishes or instructs you to pull your socks up.

Should you succeed in maintaining a balanced programme, such as interest, and realism, and increasing your audiennce by a million to 3,200,000 you will have reached the end of section one and be asked if you would like to continue on to part two. Personally I couldn't face it.



The game includes a 'demo and help mode', and the usual save/load position facility. You may also make a typed listing of the 'game as it unfolds' using your printer.

I have never listened to the Archers, soaps and serials, apart from tasting nasty, do not really interest me. This, however, is no reason why I should find *The Archers* less than inspiring — but I did. To those of you who enjoyed *Adrian Mole* this may hold some interest — I wonder what I'm missing out on?



Atmosphere	42%
Plot	40%
Interaction	18%
Lastability	41%
Value for Money	50%
Overall	45%



ALLIED ADVENTURERS INC.

Roy Alexander: *Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Message from Andromeda, Subsunk, Gremlins* — complete. Help on *Spellbound, Robin of Sherwood.*
43, Denmark Rd, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2DE

J Lycett: *Return to Eden, Emerald Isle, Jewels of Babylon, Forest at World's End, Fantasia Diamond, The Hobbit.*
24, Willingdon Park Drive, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN22 OBS

Tim Gurney: *Never Ending Story, The Hobbit, Warlord, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Jewels of Babylon, Message from Andromeda, Classic Adventure, Mordon's Quest, Classic Cave Adventure.*
10, Garwyn Ave, Roundwood, Meliden, Prestatyn, Clwyd, N Wales, LL 19

Sam Meldrum: *Fantasia Diamond.*
Whites Hill, Amersham Rd, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 2UG

John Manifold: Rusty Blade Helpline/ GLAMDRING fanzine.
1, High St, Ulceby, South Humberside, DN39 6TG

Pat Winstanley: Adventure Probe Fanzine (inc. Adventure Helpline)
13, Hollington Way, Wigan, WN3 6LS

John R Barnsley: Almost everything — Amstrad based or not!
32, Herrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs, ST17 9EB

Simon Martinez: *The Lord of the Rings* (both parts 1 and 2), *The Hobbit, Knight Tyme, The Wild Bunch.*
2 Vernhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool, L8 8LB

PS I also have a map of the best route through the Mines of Moria in Lord of the Rings.

Simon Davey: *Forest At World's End, Jewels Of Babylon, Message From Andromeda, Ship Of Doom, Espionage Island.*
22, Selkirk Street, Chaddesdon, Derby, DE2 6GL.
Need help on *Hunchback — The Adventure* and *Knight Tyme.*

Simon Marshall: *Lords Of Time, Heroes Of Karn, Message From Andromeda, Mindshadow, Red Moon, Jewels Of Babylon.*
23 Springfield Way, Stockton Lane, York, YO3 OHN (Tel 424008)

PLEASE always remember to send an SAE!

If you want to be added to the list, just write in and tell me which games you can help with and remember to give your full name and address. Of course, any useful tips you land in my lap could win you twenty pounds worth of Amstrad software!


THANATOS
Spectrum in October, Amstrad in November, Commodore 64 in December.
All £9.95
DURELL
Sales dept.,
Castle Lodge, Castle Green,
Taunton, Somerset TA1 4AB
England
software getting harder....

WIN A SONY WALKMAN

And something to keep your tapes in



Andrew Hewson is rightly proud of his latest release *Firelord* which has you ensconsed in the land of Tarot. Naturally enough, you are the hero, Sir Galaheart the brave Firelord, who has been generously volunteered to the job of saving the land from the vile and evil Queen who has sweet talked a dragon into giving her the Firestone with which she can hurl fireballs around must to the consternation of the local singed peasants.

Sir Galaheart must trot around and collect all the elements of a spell of eternal youth by hook or by crook with which to trade for the return of the Firestone.

An eternal youth spell could do remarkably well at AMTIX! Towers. Now if I had one I could make the ultimate trades with the wheezing hacks here.

Malcolm would pay greatly for eternal youth and after just one sip of the elixir he could probably leave the confines of his 1956 executive bath chair and with a hop, skip and a jump, leap into action as Newsfield's most energetic and professionally rampant editor.

Richard Eddy doesn't need eternal youth as he's forever running around being far too jolly. Skipping into work at 7.30 each morning whilst everyone else are still straining to open their cereal packets, Richard would have very little use for such a potion as he displays the character of the youngest and brightest AMTIX minion of all of us. Perhaps he could be threatened with the elixir as after just one quaff he'd probably become a born again reviewer aged about eleven months. He might still be useful as a youthful reviewer and the darling of the software companies (he calls all the girlies 'petal') but I don't think anyone would want to have to change his nappies after all the bottysquirty food he eats in a day!

Saffron would be very interested in my wares as she shows great delight in knowing whatever's going on in the office, especially if there's a chance of her picking up a piece of whatever's going. Also, the idea of her never aging and therefore not having to spend any of her meagre salary on copious amounts of Oil of Rosehip with which to keep the wrinkles at bay, would definitely mean that she'd want to put her bid in.

Tony would also want to get his sweaty little mitts on my potion if only to examine it thoroughly and break it down into its constituent components and see what makes it tick. He'd be most interested in having an eternally young and therefore state-of-the-art computer at his immediate disposal.

What you're all saying is what can we do for you in order to enter the competition. Well, what I want you to do is to give me a list of what each member of the team would offer me in order to be (or not to be that is the Richard Eddy question), the owner of the youth giving brew. Remember each member of the team can only offer me one item in trade for the elixir and so you must also give me the reason why you think that particular person should receive it.

Send your entries on nothing bigger than A4 (which is 210mm x 300mm) to **I WANNA BE THREE, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here no later than January 8th.

Copies of FIRELORD or CITY SLICKER and a poster for 25 runners up

AMTIX! COMPETITION

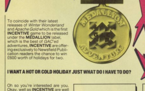

FIRELORD
THE HEAT IS ON!
Get spellbound – and hot – with this unique medieval arcade adventure.
Another fast-moving, richly animated scorcher from 1985's Programmer of the Year, Steve Crow – author of "Wizard's Lair" and "Starquake".
Available for Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore
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FREE GIFT
Free Gift with every purchase
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For Mail Order send a cheque/P.O to Hewson Consultants Ltd. Order by Credit Card sending your Access/Barclaycard number, and a specimen signature. Don't forget to enclose your name and address.
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WIN A HOLIDAY COURTESY OF INCENTIVE

AMTIX! COMPETITION

A £600 HOLIDAY FOR TWO UP FOR GRABS

1st PRIZE OF A HOT OR COLD HOLIDAY



10 runners up will each receive a useless piece of paper to swop for any great INCENTIVE game. Choose from: **WINTER WONDERLAND, APACHE GOLD, MOON CRESTA, SPLAT or CONFUZION**



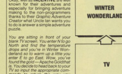
To coincide with their latest releases of *Winter Wonderland* and *Apache Gold* which is the first **INCENTIVE** game to be released under the **MEDALLION** label, which is the best of *GAC*'ed adventures, **INCENTIVE** are offering exclusively to Newsfield Publication readers the chance to win £600 worth of holidays for two.

I WANT A HOT OR COLD HOLIDAY JUST WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

Oh so you're interested are you. Okay, well as **INCENTIVE** are well known for their adventures and especially for bringing adventure making to the non-programmers thanks to their *Graphic Adventure Creator* what Uncle Ian wants you to do is answer a simple adventure puzzle.

You are sitting in front of your blank TV screen. You enter N to go North and find the temperature drops and you're in Winter Wonderland *so to warm up a little you enter E to go East. Wow, you've found the gold —* Apache Gold *that is. You decide to head back to your TV so input the appropriate commands to return the way you came.*

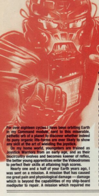
NOW THE QUESTION IS:-



WHAT'S ON TV THIS EVENING?

Send your answers to HIGH INCENTIVE, AMTIX TOWERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB **to arrive here before the 8th of January. The holiday will be awarded to the first correct entry drawn out of Crumbly's empty bathchair.**


REVIEWERS
CHALLENGE



THE ZZAP! SCORELORD HAS HIS SAY

For over eighteen cycles I have been orbiting Earth in my Command module, sent to this miserable, pathetic orb of a planet to discover whether indeed its puny organic life-forms are ever likely to show any skill at the art of wielding the joystick.

On my home world, youngsters are trained as Joystick Warriors from an early age, and as their biocircuitry evolves and becomes keener of reflex, the better young apprentices enter the Videodromes to perfect their skills at attaining high scores.

Nearly one and a half of your Earth years ago, I was sent on a mission. A mission that has caused me great pain and physiological damage — damage which is beyond the capabilities of my ship-board mediputer to repair. A mission which required me to discover a member of your pathetic species who was truly worthy of a scholarship to the Videodromes.

I made an error, shortly after arriving in orbit. A minor malfunction in my navigational computer (which is unused to identifying such small hamlets as those inhabited by your species) resulted in my arrival in the offices of a magazine devoted to Commodore 64 games-playing. Having established contact with the backward beings that I encountered in the ZZAP! offices, I set about discovering which of them was the better player of games — and my problems began. The vile ego-centric creature Rignall became my first Earth champion in the time period you refer to as 'May 1985' and since then my monthly attempts to discover other, better Joystick Warriors from the puny population of Earth has continued. Readers of ZZAP! will be familiar with the damage caused to my bio-ROMs and with the suffering I have endured as a result of my endeavours.

The strange, mutiod beings responsible for producing comment on Commodore games have continued building their egos. The ZZAP! chamber is awash with self congratulatory noises as the revolting Spiky Haired demons of Ludlow continue reviewing games. Their Egos have been growing uncontrollably, and they resist further challenges against members of the ZZAP! readership for fear of defeat and public humiliation.

It was time to change this state of affairs.

So confident were the foul ZZAP! duo of Penn and Rignall in their self-appointed roles as games-playing champions of the magazine publishing world, that they suggested they be allowed to pit their skills in a contest with reviewers from the other computer magazines produced in the vicinity. As a time of celebration approaches, which your sentimental race refers to as 'Christmas', I issued the order that the NEWSFIELD REVIEWERS CHALLENGE should be arranged.

The CRASH and AMTIX! staff were commanded to select the prime of their reviewing team to face up to Penn and Rignall. Each of the six reviewers selected a game that runs on their computer, and the contest to discover the most able Joystick Warrior began.

In choosing a game, each reviewer believed that he was attempting to thwart his five opponents by selecting a game that they were unfamiliar with and that he was good at playing. They all believed that I would award six points to the person to gain the highest score in each game, five points to the second highest and so on, and would award an overall championship to the individual with the highest total score.

A foolish assumption. Particularly foolish on the part of the ZZAP! egomaniacs, who know me of old. . . .

Before relating the tale of the challenge itself, let me introduce you to the pathetic specimens who stepped into the arena and tell you a little about the games that they each brought with them:

JULIAN RIGNALL

A decidedly evil and puny creature whose ego began to grow many years ago when he was awarded a title by an antique computer magazine by the name of C&VG. Since those days when the tiny Rignall first brushed with fame, his body and ego have grown at disproportionate rates. Currently, his ego is large enough to be regarded as a second moon for your planet while his body and musculature are still on a par with a two-week-old Orang u'tang

His choice of game is *Dropzone*, a horizontal scrolling shoot em up, available only on the Commodore.

In essence *Dropzone* resembles an arcade game by the name of *Star Gate* — a sort of enhanced *Defender*. The player controls a man with a jet pack, laser, smart bombs and an inviso cloak that grants temporary immunity to aliens and their weapons.

GARY PENN

Known as 'Girlie' to ZZAP! readers on account of his Pennchant for dressing up in nighties made for pre-pubescent schoolgirls, as well as for huge, elaborate tonsural sculptures created with the aid of giant economy sized tins of Boots Own Brand hair lacquer, Penn's prime claim to fame amongst his readership is achieved by performing Dangerous Brothers type stunts. So far he has stuffed the entire ZZAP! storecupboard's supply of joysticks down his trousers and eaten four fingers of Kit Kat sideways.

His choice for the Challenge is, again, a Commodore-only game, this time by the name of *Sanxion*. It's a one-way horizontal scrolling shoot em up in which the player zooms through forty increasingly difficult levels shooting anything that moves.

Penn 1
Rignall 2
Stone 3
Dunn 4
Valducci 5
Eddy 6

RICHARD EDDY

Known as 'Dick' to his friends and 'Dick Ed' to his enemies, Mr Eddy is Cornish by birth and upbringing and was prised from the land of clotted cream by the Editor of AMTIX who though he could do with another clot on his team. Since arriving in Ludlow a few of your Earth months ago, the small but imperfectly formed creature has elevated himself to Software Editor status, fallen in love with Berk from *Trapdoor*, and covered his corner of the AMTIX! cellar wall with pictures of Mandy Keyhoe of PIRANHA and Berk of *Trapdoor* in roughly equal quantities.

When pressed to make a choice of game for the contest, Eddy plumped for *Xeno* from ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE, believing that this *Ballblazeresque* futuresport wasn't due for release on the other two machines before the Challenge was to take place. Sadly, Dick Ed was wrong — this High-Tech Ice Hockey variant in which players aim to knock the puck into their opponent's goal with giant sleds arrived in the CRASH office in good time for the Spectrum reviewers to get some practice in . . .

MASSIMO VALDUCCI

A Stallion when it comes to playing ELITE's *Scooby Doo*, this Italian was fully aware that the doggy game has been well played in the CRASH office (although unavailable on the Commodore). Mass, as he is known, claimed to be the champion when it comes to playing *Scooby Doo* and based his choice on the probability of an easy six points . . .

A resilient fellow, El Ducci is rumoured to have contacts with the famed Ludlow Mafia and has already used his influence and means of persuasion to arrange for AMTIX! Editor Malcolm Harding to collect him every morning and drive him to work and then chauffeur him home again at the end of the day.

BEN STONE

A veritable lounge lizard from the tiny and remote Earth dwelling-zone known as Tenbury Wells, Ben Stone has been associated with CRASH for a considerable period of Earth-time. Having completed his studies at a the Tenbury Wells Academy where he specialised in playing the antique arcade machine provided for students' amusement, Ben has entered another training scheme which permits him to lounge around the CRASH office on a semi-permanent basis, supplying comments on games and generally assisting in the writing of the magazine.

The Beau Brummel of Spectrum gaming, Stone invests the majority of his paltry income in his wardrobe and is rarely seen without a set of labels, including Rebok trainers, Lacoste and Fila jumpers and Benetton playsuits. The man who took Posing to Tenbury chose *Cobra* for the Challenge — a game which had only arrived on Microdrive in the CRASH office 48 hours before the appointed day and which had only been seen and played by the CRASH staffers when the Challenge began. The game is a left and right scrolling shoot em up, full of gratuitous violence and eating, loosely based on the film of the same name. . . .

MICHAEL DUNN

Nicknamed 'Skippy' for a reason that has been lost in the mists of time, Dunn's early claim to fame arrived shortly after he joined the CRASH team as a reviewer. He was chosen to model for the AMTIX! hat and T-shirts advertisement in the arms of a rather strange young lady. An interesting biological specimen, Skippy has the ability to render his entire face, from eyebrow to earlobe, the colour of an over-ripe tomato whenever reference to that girlfriend is made. . . . A man who harbours a number of guilty secrets?

Full Throttle was this blushing reviewer's first choice — a motorbike game that appeared over two of your Earth years ago. Dunn no doubt believed that the other reviewers in the Challenge would have long ago forgotten how to play this two-wheeled race game an no doubt expected to be able to romp home to an easy six point lead in at least one event . . .

LET BATTLE BEGIN......

Dropzone

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes

RIGNALL

After much wingeing, the Spiky Haired ones from ZZAP! prevail upon the other contestants and are allowed to commence the Challenge with *Dropzone*. Rignall insists on starting, as the game is his choice, he whines. It is one of his all-time binary conquests — a conquest on which he has been building his ego for some time.

The puny one gets off to a shaky start — presumably the thrill of playing with an old flame again — and he narrowly manages to complete the first two levels without losing a life. Suddenly, within the space of ten seconds, Rignall loses two lives — am I to be rewarded with a crushing defeat on the part of one of my archhates so soon?

Sadly, it is not to be. Misery crosses the Rignall face as defeat looms, and spurred on by the inertia of his massive ego he manages to survive, completing his allotted 10 minutes as a score of 154,870 shows on the screen.

STONE

Dressed to kill, but capable of rescuing scientists? Stone steps forward muttering about having played this game a couple of times, and does his best to prove that this is indeed the case.

He starts off resonably well, expiring at the end of his first game with a score of 14,840 and a fair amount of time remaining in which to improve his status.

In his second game, Ben doesn't lose a life until at least 3 minutes have passed and 28,460 points have been logged on the clock. Unperturbed, he plays on with a maniacal gleam in his eye, expiring gracefully just as the 10-minute klaxon sounds. A creditable 55,080 points are entered into the communiputer's log against Stone's name.

EDDY

Another *Dropzone* virgin. Another expected failure as far as the ZZAP! rivals are concerned. Richard bravely steps forward to take his place at he joystick and commences play — only to demonstrate his lack of experience by losing his first life after a mere ten seconds. A true hair-trigger performance.

Gathering a little composure under a barrage of verbal abuse and loud hilarity from Penn and Rignall, Eddy presses on, but his first game lasts barely a minute and he collects a paltry 4,580 for his efforts.

Nine minutes remain for him to develop a technique, but Dick manages three more complete games before the time limit expires. He has to be satisfied with an overall personal best of 15,440.

DUNN

The first of the lambs brought to the Commodore for slaughter in front of the Spiky Haired vile ones. Skippy has not played this game before — so understandably finds it difficult to survive. Within a couple of minutes his first attempt is over, and a score of 9,480 is all he has achieved.

Pressing on, Dunn seems to be a quick learner. His second foray sees him nudge over the 20,000 mark but then he suddenly goes to pieces. A life is lost at 23,780, another at 24,040 and the last remaining incarnation is removed as the clock hits 24,800.

Valiantly, this petite player sporting a red LM hat starts again, but is rapidly wiped out after scoring a mere 5,430 points. There is no time remaining in the 10 minute allocation for a fourth attempt. It is yet very early in the Challenge, however . . .

PENN

Another cocky Commodorian. Penn marches up to the playzone, straddles the chair, oozing selfconfidence and a strong aroma of Boots hairlacquer . . .

Penn's familiarity with the game shows the moment he begins play — within 23 seconds he has gathered up and rescued the eight scientists to complete the first level. He continues to romp through the second and third levels at a rapid pace and I find myself becoming annoyed at this mutoids's arrogance.

Ha! I am quickly pleased — overconfidence combined with the desire to show off causes the worm to lose concentration for a moment, and he loses two lives. He slows down a little, playing more cautiously but nevertheless manages to scrape a huge score of 123,010 in a single game by the time the klaxon goes and his time in front of the Commodore screen is brought to a timely end.

VALDUCCI

Champing at the bit, Mass throws himself into this totally unfamiliar game like 'a bull at a gate' to borrow an illogical linguistic construction from your Earth language.

Another hair-trigger merchant, El Ducci grimaces, sneers and snarls his way through early failure — taking less than 90 seconds to expire with a score of 6,530.

He fares a little better in the second game, clocking 15,090 before dying — thus forcing his AMTIX! colleague firmly into last place. He continues, attempting to improve his ranking, but despite cramming three more short games into the remaining time, fails to improve his score.

Scooby Doo

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes

EDDY

This is another of those 'cute' games that seem to attract Dick Ed's attentions — rather like *Trapdoor*. He claims to 'love' playing *Scooby*, and sets to, making strange cooing noises.

This would-be spiky haired reviewer (he gave up emulating Penn when his meagre wages would not cover the enormous cost of hair lacquer and gel) seems competent at this game. He finishes the first level with a score of 8,590 and without the loss of a single life. He continues to complete the second level without death and has 31,450 points to his credit.

El Ducci begins to make threatening noises and starts talking loudly about 'concrete trainers' (whatever they may be) as Dickie passes the 37,000 mark which he celebrates with the loss of a life. Another life is lost as 37,700 appears on the clock and the Stallion whinnies in anger. Another life goes at 38,000 and another at 38,450. The game ends on 38,700 after a little over eight minutes.

Confident with his high score, and apparently oblivious to the dark threats from the Mafiosi, Eddy kisses his *Trapdoor* poster with glee and skips off for a cup of tea, declining to begin another game.

RIGNALL

Not a total virgin when it comes to this doggy game, Rignall demonstrates the sneaky side of his vile personality the moment he begins play. Rather that attempting to complete levels and rescue his mates, the puny one remains rooted to the spot biffing ghosts to collect points.

Howls of derision echo round the arena and Rignall is forced to make some token effort towards actually playing the game. After 4 minutes of manipulative play, he is on the second level with a score of 21,100 when his lives run out.

Commencing a second game, the odious creature collects a mere 9,800 points before timeout.

DUNN

Claiming moderate proficiency at the Spectrum version of this game, Dunn begins play and the spectators soon wonder if the Amstrad version is a different platter of Scooby snacks! For a tense half minute he is crowded by ghosts which he has difficulty in keeping at bay and eventually loses a life.

Progressing through the first level with plenty of close shaves, he manages to rescue Thelma and attain a score of 5,000. Collecting three new lives in quick succession, things begin to go well: then disaster strikes. After five minutes of play the game comes to an abrupt end with 19,500 on the clock.

Restarting rapidly, Skippy plays a remarkably similar game and is on the point of rescuing Fred with a score of 19,250 when time runs out for him . . .

PENN

Aha! This is a game that Penn has not played before. Maybe he is due for his first come-uppance!

Grudgingly, I have to admit that he does rather well. Rescuing Thelma to complete Level One, Penn has lost one life as the second level starts. He begins to get smug. Five lives are lost in the space of a single minute, and the smugness disappears. With one life remaining, he battles on, desperately trying to rescue Fred. I am pleased to see him meet a swift end at the hands of a marauding Jack-in-the-pot.

With a score of 19,240 to his credit, Penn takes a second crack at rescuing Scooby's chums but has little time to improve his score and is left with a score of 11,850 as the ten minutes allocation ends.

VALDUCCI

A chance to pull back from a previous poor showing. El Ducci settles in front of his favourite game and sets about proving to the assembled throng that he is the Godfather when it comes to *Scooby Doo*.

And he certainly does a good job. Although the first few minutes of play reveal no spectacular skills — the Italian One loses his first life after a minute and a half when 950 points have been amassed — staying power is obviously the Stallion's strong point . . . he continues playing until the time limit is up. He has galloped up to the second level and has a score of 37,050 when time runs out.

STONE

Mr Label wears a few more microns from the soles of his Reboks as he approaches the joystick and states that he is 'cool' at the game. Mr Cool loses his first life two minutes into the game — towards the end of the first level. In less than a minute, he recovers his composure, cranks his designer score up to 13,150 and completes Level One. Thereafter he loses lives at roughly one minute intervals, steadily building up his score until the last life goes at 9 minutes and 15 seconds with the clock at 33,200.

Evidently a practitioner of the Designer Endgame, this lad: he finishes as close to the expiry of the time limit as he can.

Full Throttle

Aim: to achieve the shortest time for a three lap circuit of Silverstone



VALDUCCI

Demanding that he at least be allowed to leap into the saddle of a Moto Guzzi as he hasn't seen this game before, our macho hero screams round the track, remaining firmly in last position for the entire first lap. He moves up to 35th place on the second lap. The third and final lap begins, and Mass finds himself back at the tail end. Some jostling improves his placing temporarily — he reaches 37th place — but manages to regain his tail-end placing in time for the finish line. The race ends after 2 minutes and 43 seconds of dubious riding.

STONE

Not a designer game, this one, in the opinion of Mr Trendful. Moan, gripe, complain "This is years old." Admitting to having played the game "ages ago", Stone zooms off and completes the first lap in one minute dead, attaining 30th place briefly. On the second circuit he shaves a few seconds off his lap time, crossing the line in 1 minute 53 seconds in last position.

An uneventful final lap sees Ben finish the race in a total time of 2 minutes and 44 seconds — in last place. Not a leader of the pack when it comes to biking. . . .

RIGNALL

"Har Har" quoth the weedy one, "I played this one back in the good old days before I got a Commodore", and settles down in front of the screen.

A slight problem is encountered on the first corner, which has the Rignall rump in danger of severe damage, but a rapid recovery is made and the noxious creature gets into his stride, attaining 17th place during the first lap. He fares less well on the second lap, dropping to last as he crosses the finishing line for the second time. A minor recovery takes place in the final lap and Rignall takes the chequered flag with a time of 2 minutes 40 seconds.

DUNN

Clearly this is Skippy's game. He proves to be rather good at it, burning round the track and gaining first position with ease. He suffers a collision during the first lap, but isn't penalised too badly in the event, crossing the winning line with a time of 2 minutes 30 seconds, 12 seconds ahead of the first of the computer controlled bikers.

Strange, I would have expected the ZZAP! Dirty Tricks Department to have swung into distraction action with loud references to Skippy's girlfriend, but they remained silent. Odd. Most odd indeed . . .

EDDY

There's nothing cute or cuddly about motorbikes, and seeing as the Cornish Clot hasn't played this game before, no-one in the arena seems to believe that the AMTIX! Accolader is going to fare very well.

Gripping the joystick as if it was a handlebar is not the brightest way to play the game, the assembled throng points out, and eventually Dick Ed stops living up to his name and sets out on the gruelling ride. He gets off to a decidedly shaky start, weaving all over the track, and is soon miles behind all the other riders. Even with no other riders in sight, the Cornish Pixie seems to be suffering from clotted reflexes and has severe difficulty remaining on the track..

Eventually he catches up. He keeps nudging other bikes repeatedly yet manages to make his way to 33rd place at one stage during the second lap. Disaster strikes: he hits several bikes, falls into last place and drags over the line in a time of 2 minutes 42 seconds — a surprisingly good time, given his riding abilities.

PENN

More moaning: "It's like a poor man's *Super Cycle*". Winge, complain. No doubt the wide-jawed, joystick-trousered one is suffering from a lack of hairspray, for his morale seems to be drooping a little, along with his strangely coiffed hair. "The flickering bikes are putting me off", he winges, bumping his way around the track.

An uninspiring ride from such a self-proclaimed game player — high spot of the three laps is the brief moment when Penn squeaks into 36th place, but he manages to finish 39th in 2 minutes 41 seconds. A fairly close matched ride all round, with Skippy justifying his personal choice by a comfortable margin.

Sanxion

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes

STONE

More designer complaining from the Effete One. His first game lasts a little over two minutes in which Ben claws his way to a score of 6,480. Apparently he has played this game a little, but from his performance he might as well not have bothered . . .

Game Two gets off to a slightly better start — 10,580 points are on the clock when the first life goes, but then the second, third and fourth lives are all lost on the walls and no extra points are gained! Wasteful playing, indeed.

After a couple of hundred seconds, Wave One has been negotiated and the score pushed up to 11,380. When he finally expires — with 3 minutes playtime available to him, Stone throws in the towel and gives up. Pusillanimous play indeed.

EDDY

The soft, wimpy Eddy likes *Sanxion*. The soft, wimpy Eddy rapidly proves he's not very good at playing *Sanxion*. Three games are played in a little over three minutes and 2,700 is the highest score reached.

Game four gets off to a slightly better start — only two crashes in the first 30 seconds — but before long D-Ed is having problems again, flying slowly, shooting slowly and bumping into things. What this Cornish Patsie needs is something big and colourful and girlie like *Trapdoor*. I despair of him.

Oh rarity! He has managed to squeeze onto the second level. No bonus achieved in the transition, though. A bomb puts paid to his run for glory at 7,640 points.

Starting out again with less than four minutes remaining, he negotiates the first level successfully, running into a bomb once but otherwise managing a clear run. Entering the bonus level with 2,950 the cutie starts the second level with 4,765 points and starts having a hard time again. Somehow he survives — and almost begins to shine, but crashes into the first set of barriers at the end of the level with 9 minutes 15 seconds elapsed and 8,910 points on the clock.

VALDUCCI

A manic style of play characterises El Ducci's attempts at *Sanxion* — a game he admits to having attempted on a couple of occasions. His first game lasts a mere 47 seconds and yields 1,650 points. Second time around he lasts 4 seconds longer, but still comes out with 1,650 points. Cunningly consistent if a little short and sweet! Manic stabs of the fire button combined with rather slow reactions don't help . . .

Slowing down a bit from the premature ejection style of missile hurling, the Stallion takes his third game a bit more steadily, survives the first level and progresses carefully until his last life is removed by a collision with a barrier at 9,000 points.

Another quick game sees him enter the second level and survive long enough to collect 7,400 points — performance he repeats once more, crashing just as the klaxon sounds and 5,960 have been collected.

Stacatto stabs combined with staying power seems to be the gaming style adopted by the Italian Stallion in all but *Scooby Doo*.

PENN

Slithering into the hotseat, collecting the joystick coolly and starting play, Penn takes to *Sanxion* like an Umbertian swamp slug to a rippling pool of slime. It is a sickening sight, watching him play casually and almost competently. He has nearly made it to the end of the third stage and collected over 28,000 points before he loses the first life of the game, a mere 3 minutes 42 seconds after starting. Two minutes and another 13,000 points elapse before the second loss of life — but it only takes another 7 seconds for the Mohican Monster to die again, I note with some satisfaction.

A tricky moment follows around the 49,000 mark and Penn opts to commit suicide when confronted with the Mother Ship. One minute remains as he enters the last bonus screen and Bonus Level 5 looms nigh. 'Girlie' commences Level 6 with 71,770, and six seconds before timeout he loses a life, achieving a score of 73,070.

Unable to resist an opportunity to demonstrate the sheer size of his ego, the revolting creature continues to play while all around him yawn with boredom. The arrogant fellow finally leaves the computer with a large, smug grin spread across his large, smug mouth and 124,500 on the clock. . . .

DUNN

It's all new to him. Looking particularly frail and Rignallesque behind his specs, Skippy plonks himself down behind a Commodoreful of *Sanxion* and prepares to do his best at a game he has just seen played for the first time.

His first attempt lasts almost 30 seconds, and before the 90 second mark is up, two more games have taken place. The Blushing One's third game begins to look a little more promising as he blasts his way through to the second level. It looks like a probable personal best for the Nervous Creature as he expires on the barriers at the end of the second level with a score of 10,620 points.

And indeed, that it exactly what it proves to be — a further three short games fail to yield significant scores as the 10 minute limit ends.

RIGNALL

Rignall must sense defeat, for he begins a litany of moans covering a range of subjects to do with not liking the game, not having had the chance to practice enough, and hardly having time to pilot a Sanxion Fighter long enough to get used to the controls. All this, despite hours playing the game when it came in for review. Ha! he will lose to Penn, that is for sure.

He starts badly, losing a life after 20 seconds. Thus un-nerved, he only just makes it to the second level. The small Spiky creature copes with the third level with manic precision and enters the fourth level with 35,380 points to his credit. At the start of level five, he gets a little over-confident and loses two lives in quick succession. Two more lives disappear before the Mother Ship is encountered and disposed of.

The defence barriers at the end of the fifth level prove a major problem. After severe effort, which appears to raise strange bruises on the thorax of this spindly being, Rignall fails to avoid death and ends the game with a

score of 43,990. Only 90 seconds remain, so it is clearly not worth continuing with a second game.

Xeno

Aim: the best score from two games played on Average Skill level is used. Each game consists of four minute-long quarters

EDDY

The Cornish Piskie believed that *Xeno* would only be available on the Amstrad by the time my Challenge took place — and his decision to include it in the AMTIX! portfolio of games was clearly influenced by this factor. The diminutive one is overtaken by events, however, and the game arrives in the CRASH office in good time for Stone and Dunn to get plenty of practice.

This news is broken to him just as he starts to play, and somewhat petulantly, he commences. Clearly, the foolish fellow is un-nerved by the news. He fails to score in the 1st quarter and it ends 0-0. The computer score 16 seconds into the 2nd quarter and shortly thereafter Dick Ed pulls back to 1-1. Plenty of active play ensues and just before the 2nd quarter ends Dickie is about to shoot and. . . . the quarter ends. Not his day, it seems!

He concedes another goal early in the 3rd quarter, but manages to pull back to a 2-2 draw by the end of the rather uneventful game. If this is the best the lad can do, needlework might have been a better choice of occupation . . .

The Cornish Clot's next game goes rather better — he maintains the edge over the computer, scoring early in the 1st quarter and after about 20 seconds in the 2nd quarter. As the 4th quarter starts, Dickie is winning 3-0, and is beginning to look pleased with himself. Pride always comes before a fall, according to one of your Earth Interjections, and the case is proved yet again. A mere 9 seconds before the end of the game, the computer scores and Dickie is left with a best score of 3-1. He appears less than pleased. . . .

DUNN

Maybe Eddy was put off by the fact that the CRASH team were gloating about all the practice they had been able to put in. Now is the time for the pudding to be proved by consumption — to paraphrase another of your strange linguistic constructions.

My Pleasure Circuits thrill as Dunn begins to lose. By the end of the 1st quarter the computer leads 4-0, a lead it expands to 5-0 by the end of the 2nd quarter and to 7-0 by the end of the 3rd. At the end of Game One the blushing Spectrum-wielder is 8-0 down to the computer. I have not had so much pleasure watching a Challenger play a game since my Mission began, and I sense my Pleasure Circuit overload fuses warming for the first time in eons. . . . What can Skippy do to amuse me in the second game?

His second session starts rather better. In the 1st quarter the computer only succeeds in scoring one goal. My Pleasure Circuit fuses cool a little. During the second quarter the computer hammers two more goals home, and in the third quarter scores three. The final quarter begins with Skippy a gentle shade of pink and the computer 6-0 in the lead. It ends with a 7-0 defeat and a rather more intense shade of pink reflecting off the monitor screen . . .

VALDUCCI

The manic technique comes to the fore again. I have little desire to report on the Stallion's performance here. Suffice to say he wins his first game 7-0 and then goes on to perform like an agitated rabbit running away from myxamatosis, ending up exhausted with a lead of 14 goals to 0. I am displeased.

STONE

My early pleasure in observing the computer win at *Xeno* looks set to be ruined. Stone has decided that this game is a game for posers such as he, and fights the computer every inch of the way. He wins the first match, 6-2. Spurred on, he manages to play even more designer shots in his second match, and concludes with an 11-1 lead. May the kangaroo skin on his trainers moulder . . .

RIGNALL

Strange indeed. Rignall has never played this before. Yet the puny one desists from the usual defensive barrage of whining that usually forms a part of his binary foreplay if he feels in the slightest danger of doing less than well. I am bemused.

Aha! He has been studying the gameplay of his opponents and has worked out a sneaky way of scoring goals against the computer. He plays an underhand match, and as a result I find myself having to cope with Rignall's 15-0 lead at the end of the first game.

In the 1st quarter it becomes apparent that the sneaky mode of play is not infallible — the wimp only scores two goals. In the second quarter he fails to score and gets stuck on the elastic so gives up in disgust. . . . There's nothing worse than a cheat cheated!

PENN

Another *Xeno* virgin, Penn appears strangely confident, too. What is going on in the spiky minds of these Commodorians?

He beats the computer 3-2 in his first match. To my eternal disgust, he does rather better in his second game, winning 4-0. See how easily pleasure turns to pain — I was overjoyed in the early stages of this section of the contest, and now find myself suffused with frustrated anger. Those who I least wanted to do well have given a creditable account of themselves . . .

Cobra

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes

DUNN

This is supposedly the trump card in the CRASH armoury — only Dunn and Stone have seen it before this moment. Once more, Dunn seems unable to capitalise on an advantage. Within 90 seconds his first session has ended with a paltry score of 6,300. His second effort lasts a little over a minute, but his score improves to 17,000. Four minutes or so after restarting yet again, he has amassed a score of 36,950 and ends the game. HA!

Desperately trying to avoid blushing, Skippy rapidly starts his fourth game — and runs out of time with 44,400 on the clock.

RIGNALL

The unpleasant creature desists from moaning yet again. I fear the worst. He starts off, collects a pistol almost immediately but then loses the pistol and a life in quick succession. Next, he finds a machine gun and starts to massacre everything in sight — his score has crept up to 30,550 before both gun and life are lost. I am aggrieved.

Invincibility comes to his on-screen persona in a hamburger, but it soon wears off; he is stunned by a pram and loses a life. At the end of Level One the score is 43,550. Seconds later, the pasty-faced mutoid loses his remaining lives and ends up with an overall score of 44,050.

Three short and pathetic attempts follow with Rignall deliberately ending one of them to start again. Nearly 5 minutes remain on the clock as the fourth game begins. Rignall does passably well, moving on to Level Two with 30,000 points and his score creeps up. With less than a minute remaining, he is killed of totally and 41,650 shows on the the clock.

VALDUCCI

After 90 seconds the Italian Stallion has finished his first dose of crimebusting. It seems to be over very quickly for him. His second game takes 99 seconds, his third 47 seconds, his fourth 69 seconds and his fifth bash lasts all of 63 seconds. Top score so far: 8,700 achieved on the first attempt. Strange, given that he and Mr Stallone share the same national origins. . . .

Less than four minutes remain — time for another trio of tries at least, all no doubt pathetically low-scoring. I am amused by the inept attempts of this 'tough guy' to score points by on-screen killing. Maybe in real life, this baby Mafiosi is, as your strange Earth language would have it, ''all mouth and trousers''.

Things do not look well — he is shot, stabbed and shot again early into the next go, but soon Mass begins mass executions with a machine gun. Points build up at an alarming rate, and the clock registers over 20,000 . . . At last the Italian one has found his form, to my dismay. The Stallone-emulation attempts end at the hands of a bazooka-wielding granny with a score of 24,050 after 9 minutes 18 seconds of play.

EDDY

Another bad start. Dead after 53 seconds with 4,450 points on the clock. In Dick Ed's second game, he manages to get the machine gun and begins an orgy of mindless slaughter. Soon the would-be Spiky Haired One has amassed 25,150 points and become temporarily invincible. Death follows quite rapidly, however, as his score hits 28,600. Six puny games follow before timeout, in which the best score the foolish fellow can create is 8,300

STONE

A piece of Designer Programming, this, to judge by Ben's desire to play *Cobra*. He claims, loudly, that he is good when it comes to mindless violence. His skill is displayed to all in his first attempt: Stone gathers no moss and hardly any points, being wiped out with 4,150 points to his credit. How are the mighty claims defused!

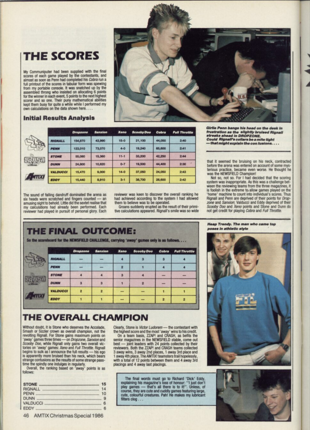
His second game has all the hallmarks of an AMTIX! reviewer, too — 3,900 points before expiry.

Clearly worried, a large amount of effort goes into the next Stone attempt. Casting caution to the wind and risking the addition of unbecoming sweat stains to his expensive garments, Stone cusses and swears his way to 42,250 points. There is plenty of time remaining in the 10 minute allocation, but Stone reverts to the EDDY/VALDUCCI style of gameplay once more. . . .

PENN

Ha! Incompetence shows through. Penn has never played this game before, a fact he demonstrates with elegant simplicity by ending his first game with a massive score of 650 points. I feel I am about to have my Pleasure Circuits stimulated once more.

Strangely, this wide-mouthed creature finds his feet with his second game, achieving a score of 31,400 at the end of the Level One and progresses to clock up a massive score of 65,600 before expiring. A large allocation of time remains, but the smugness takes over and Penn merely toys with a couple of short games to amuse himself before vacating the joystick. And on that unhappy note, the last Challenge game has been played. It is time to compile the scores and analyse the results . . .



THE SCORES

My Communiputer had been supplied with the final scores of each game played by the contestants, and almost as soon as Penn had completed his *Cobra* run a full printout of the scores in tabular form was spewing from my portable console. It was snatched up by the assembled throng who insisted on allocating 6 points for the winner in each event, 5 points to the next highest scorer and so one. Their puny mathematical abilities kept them busy for quite a while while I performed my own calculations on the data shown here. . . .

Initial Results Analysis

	Dropzone	Sanxion	Xeno	Scooby Doo	Cobra	Full Throttle
RIGNALL	154,870	43,990	15-0	21,100	44,050	2:40
PENN	123,010	73,070	4-0	19,240	65,600	2:41
STONE	55,080	15,360	11-1	33,200	42,250	2:44
DUNN	24,800	10,620	0-7	19,500	44,400	2:30
VALDUCCI	15,470	9,000	14-0	37,050	24,050	2:43
EDDY	15,440	8,910	3-1	38,700	28,600	2:42

Girlie Penn bangs his head on the desk in frustration as the slightly bruised Rignall streaks ahead in DROPZONE. Could Rignall's collars be a mite tight — that might explain the con tusions. . . .

The sound of falling dandruff dominated the arena as six heads were scratched and fingers counted — an amusing sight to behold. Little did the sextet realise that my calculations had already been performed. Each reviewer had played in pursuit of personal glory. Each reviewer was keen to discover the overall ranking he had achieved according to the system I had allowed them to believe was to be operated.

Groans suddenly erupted as the result of their primitive calculations appeared. Rignall's smile was so wide that it seemed the bruising on his neck, contracted before the arena was entered on account of some mysterious practice, became even worse. He thought he was the NEWSFIELD Champion!

Not so, not so. For I had decided that the scoring system was inappropriate. As this was a challenge between the reviewing teams from the three magazines, it is foolish in the extreme to allow games played on the 'home' machine to count into individual's scores. Thus Rignall and Penn are deprived of their points for *Dropzone* and *Sanxion*; Valducci and Eddy deprived of their *Scooby Doo* and *Xeno* points and Stone and Dunn do not get credit for playing *Cobra* and *Full Throttle*.

THE FINAL OUTCOME:

So the scoreboard for the NEWSFIELD CHALLENGE, carrying 'away' games only is as follows. . . .

	Dropzone	Sanxion	Xeno	Scooby Doo	Cobra	Full Throttle
RIGNALL	—	—	4	3	3	4
PENN	—	—	2	1	4	4
STONE	4	4	3	4	—	—
DUNN	3	3	1	2	—	—
VALDUCCI	2	2	—	—	1	1
EDDY	1	1	—	—	2	2

Heap Trendy. The man who came top poses in athletic style

THE OVERALL CHAMPION

Without doubt, it is Stone who deserves the Accolade, Smash or Sizzler crown as overall champion, not the revolting Rignall. For Stone gains maximum points on 'away' games three times — on *Dropzone*, *Sanxion* and *Scooby Doo*, while Rignall only gains two overall victories on 'away' games: *Xeno* and *Full Throttle*. Rignall begins to sulk as I announce the full results — his ego is apparently more bruised than his neck, which bears strange contusions as the results of some strange passtime the spindly one indulges in regularly.

Overall, the ranking based on 'away' points is as follows:

STONE 15
RIGNALL 14
PENN 10
DUNN 9
VALDUCCI 6
EDDY 6

Clearly, Stone is *Victor Ludorem* — the contestant with the highest score and the most 'away' wins to his credit.

On a team basis, ZZAP! and CRASH, as befits the senior magazines in the NEWSFIELD stable, come out best — joint leaders with 24 points collected by their reviewers. Both the ZZAP! and CRASH teams collected 3 away wins, 3 away 2nd places, 1 away 3rd place and 1 away 4th place. The AMTIX! teamsters trail hopelessly, with a total of 12 points between them and 4 away 3rd placings and 4 away last placings.

The final words must go to Richard 'Dick' Eddy, explaining his magazine's loss of honour: "I just don't play games — that's all there is to it!". Unless, of course, they are cute and cuddly games featuring large, cute, colourful creatures. Pah! He makes my lubricant filters clog . . .

AMTIX! Christmas Special

THE AMAZING . . .

BANG . . . BANG . . .

SPLOT..YOU'RE DEAD COMP!

part II THE SAGA CONTINUES. . . .

AMTIX! COMPETITION

BE YOUR OWN 'ROGUE TROOPER' WITH A DAY AT COMBAT ZONE
Courtesy of PIRANHA

SHOOT AN AMTIX! STAFFER

YOUR COMPUTER MAG NEEDS YOU!



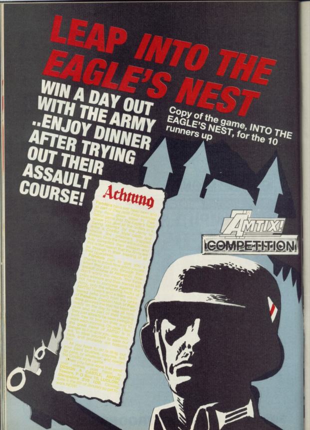
You may remember a couple of issues ago we ran a competition that looked very much like this one. Well, once again you are far too quick for a humble minion like myself. It's true, and **PIRANHA** are now extending the competition to get even more winners to add to the ones we already have, so that Newsfield and a select band of their readers can spend a day at Combat Zone. Combat Zone you will remember is that amazing place where you can play soldiers, and put your joystick sharpened reactions to the test by shooting various writing minions with red paint. Paint with which once you're hit means it's time to lie down and play dead! No cheating now, lie down and die like a good little soldier!

PIRANHA's ever-so-loverly Mandy Keyho is now going to hire the entire Combat Zone kaboodle so that reviewers, **PIRANHA** staff, and readers alike can have the entire day all to themselves, without the bother of any non-computerish combatants getting in the way of our eversofast and itchy trigger fingers.

Well, all you have to do to win your commission in this platoon of wheezing binary hacks is to design a recruitment poster for the readers army. Yes, 'cos it's going to be an all-out war once we all arrive there during the half term holidays.

Put your Kitchener type poster on a sheet of paper, no bigger than A4 (which is the size of the page you're reading), and send the finished article to; **Strike Force Amtix! II, AMTIX! Training Camp, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB. Entries must arrive before January the 8th 1987.**

30 Copies of ROGUE TROOPER on offer!

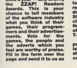


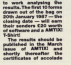
LEAP INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST
WIN A DAY OUT WITH THE ARMY ..ENJOY DINNER AFTER TRYING OUT THEIR ASSAULT COURSE!
Copy of the game, INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST, for the 10 runners up
AMTIX!
COMPETITION
Achtung
Pandora have just been born and as part of their post-natal exercise they have given issue to their debut game Into The Eagle's Nest where you give all the orders in a daring attempt by the Army to enter a Colditz style castle and rescue the prisoners trapped therein. Only the best will successfully complete their mission and this is the reason that the Army are so through in their training of all their operatives.
Pandora plan to give you a chance to prove how good you are when they put you through their assault course at Aldershot. Now don't worry too much. The three prize winners and their friends will not have to compete against the Army, only the wheezing hacks of AMTIX! Towers and a team volunteered (who me?) from the ranks of Pandora. Captain Nick of Pandora assures me that his team will ready on the day to take all honours and as part of their training they can already be seen swinging from tree to tree on their way to work each morning. Oh dear, I fear the great name of AMTIX! is in danger so it is up to you, dear readers, to steel yourself to save our face, and probably our bottoms too!
All you have to do is drag out your paint brushes, crayons, felt tip pens, or whatever, and design the Colditz style castle.
When you have done that send your entries, post haste, to DESIGN A CASTLE, AMTIX! Towers, P O Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Closing date is the 8th of January so get to work NOW!

VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!

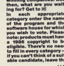
AMTIX!

Readers' Awards

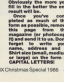

Christmas comes but once a year — and with it, the **ZZAP!** Readers Awards. This is your chance to tell members of the software industry what you think of their games, their programmers and their advertisements. Vote for the games, the people and the adverts which you feel are worthy of praise. Fill in the form over the page and send it to us as


fast as you can so our Database Minion can get to work analysing the results. The first 10 forms drawn out of the bag on 20th January 1987 — the closing date — will earn their senders £20 worth of software and a **AMTIX!** T-Shirt!

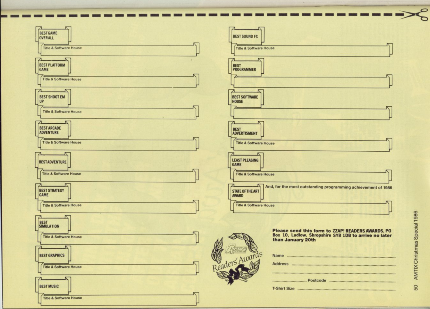
The results should be published in the March issue of **AMTIX!** and shortly thereafter the certificates of accolade


will be awarded to the winning companies. Well then, what are you waiting for? Get to it!

In each appropriate category enter the name of the program and the software house for which you wish to vote. Please note: products must have a 1986 copyright to be eligible. There's no need to fill in every category — if you can't think of a suitable candidate, leave the


relevant category blank. Obviously the more you fill in the better the end result will be.

Once you've completed as much of the form as possible, remove this page from the magazine (or photocopy it) and send it to us. Don't forget to write your name, address and T-Shirt size (small, medium or large) on the form in **CAPITAL LETTERS!**



BEST GAME OVERALL
Title & Software House

BEST PLATFORM GAME
Title & Software House

BEST SHOOT EM UP
Title & Software House

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

BEST ADVENTURE
Title & Software House

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BEST GRAPHICS
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BEST MUSIC
Title & Software House

BEST SOUND FX
Title & Software House

BEST PROGRAMMER

BEST SOFTWARE HOUSE

BEST ADVERTISMENT
Title & Software House

LEAST PLEASING GAME
Title & Software House

And, for the most outstanding programming achievement of 1986

STATE OF THE ART AWARD
Title & Software House

Please send this form to ZZAP! READERS AWARDS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB to arrive no later than January 20th

Name ....

Address ....

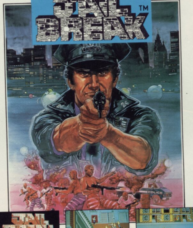
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The Latest Smash Hit from KONAMI

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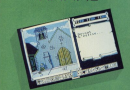
Available from all leading retailers and in case of difficulty send cheques or postal orders to:
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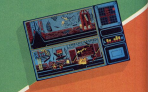




KHAÂL

MANHATTAN 95





A 100 % role playing game... Come down into the fascinating and devilish world of THULYNTE. Whether you are a warrier or a dealer, you will have to fight against terrible ennemies whose only aim is to destroy you.

Forget about soapy characters and flying witches ! The most fearsome of all anti-socials has got one mission : to get the president out of the prison-like MANHATTAN. Blood will not be spared !

UBI Soft

GET YOUR FINGER ON THE BUTTON WITH KONIX!



KONIX are not a company that are well known for their fabulous games. This is not overly surprising as they have made their name by helping everyone to play hundreds of games getting bigger and better scores with the **KONIX** joysticks range and now they are celebrating the fastest joystick ever with the birth of the *KONIX SPEEDKING JOYSTICK* which is the micro switch model that is shaped to the palm of your hand. No more unsightly blisters and throbbing thumbs thanks to its ergonomic lines.

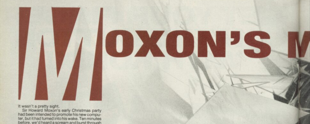
Well I say everyone but quality is always reflected in price and you pays for what you get at around £13.00 a joystick.

I never get a chance to have anything but the worst in just about everything. Take clothes for instance. Whilst all the joystick-pumping prannets at the Towers clothe themselves in the latest up-to-the-minute designer computer junkie wear, and sport the very latest T shirts complete with the various designer logos, the most up to date T shirt that I have lurking at the back of my wardrobe is a Tinger and Tucker fan club T shirt that Auntie Mabel gave to me in preference to wearing it herself and giving her age away.

What I could do with is a T shirt logo that would be the envy of all my friends. Something that I could wear on a shirt around the office and for once, be the one wearing the latest in designer minion clothes.

Unfortunately, I have very few ideas myself and not being blessed with the same kind of fashion sense as the other office trendies, I will leave the hard work to you. If your entry sews up the first prize you'll be the proud owner of a DMP 2000 printer and an Amstrad Disk Drive plus receiving your very own **KONIX SPEEDKING JOYSTICK.**

Put your designs for the ultimate in minionesque wear onto an A4 piece of paper and send it off with the jolly old GPO to arrive here by the 8th of January. Don't forget to put your name and address on the back of your entry and our name and address on the front of the envelope which is: **DESIGNER MINION, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here no later than the 8th of January.



MOXON'S M

It wasn't a pretty sight.

Sir Howard Moxon's early Christmas party had been intended to promote his new computer, but it had turned into his wake. Ten minutes before, we'd heard a scream and burst through the locked door to find Sir Howard dead in his office, having entered it through the glass separating it from the rest of his workshop.

"What happened, Inspector Rogoff?"

"No idea", I said, waving back the shocked guests. We didn't want to confuse things for Forensic. I took in the details of the room; the corpse in the office, and an unfamiliar computer on the centre bench, an A1 set-up with modem and heavy-duty manipulator. The pincers were placed over a chessboard on a low table, and a toppled chair lay on the floor nearby.

In the not too distant future will it be possible to program a computer to kill?

Read this special Christmas story by RAY GIRVAN and find out!

When the print crew had done, I took a closer look at the computer. With any luck I had a witness; the mains lamps were on, and judging by the scattered notes, Moxon had been using it before he died. There was no screen; he'd had a vu-chip implant. Me, I'm not keen enough to want wires in my grey matter, so I plugged a pair of projection specs into the bus, looked at a blank wall, and waited for the memory dump to scroll by.

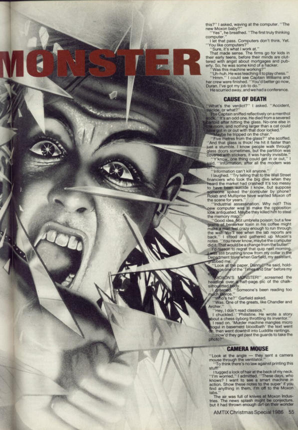
The trouble was, there wasn't any. It was wiped clean! After watching the blocks of nop bytes filling the lower pages, I flicked to higher memory and found the same. The disks were blank too.

"Mr Rogoff, can you spare a mo"?"

I turned, but couldn't see through the wall of blind zeroes whipping past. I pushed up the glasses, and saw a straggly-haired kid in a loud floral shirt at my elbow.

"I'm Duran Moxon", he announced. "Is my uncle dead?"

I nodded. He looked pale, but unmoved. Shock, I guessed. The rules said throw him out, but I thought that I might be able to learn something from one of the family, so for once I ignored the rules and let him stay. "What is



MONSTER

this?'' I asked, waving at the computer. ''The new Moxon baby?''

''Yes'', he breathed. ''The first truly thinking computer.''

I let that pass. Computers don't think. Yet. ''You like computers?''

''Sure, it's what I work at.''

That made sense. The firms go for kids in their early teens, before their minds are cluttered with angst about mortgages and puberty. So, he was some kind of a hacker.

''Was this machine working?''

''Uh-huh. He was teaching it to play chess.''

''Hmm.'' I could see Captain Williams and her crew were finished. ''You'd better go now, Duran. I've got my job to do.''

He scurried away, and we had a conference.

CAUSE OF DEATH

''What's the verdict?'' I asked. ''Accident, suicide, or what?''

The Captain sniffed reflectively on a menthol stick. ''It's an odd one. He died from a severed cartoid after hitting the glass. No-one else in the room, and nothing larger than a cat could have got in or out with that door locked.''

''Maybe he tripped on the chair.''

''Five metres from the glass?'' she scoffed. ''And that glass is thick! He hit it faster than just a stumble. I know people walk through glass doors sometimes, but the partition was covered with stickers, it was hardly invisible.''

''Y'know, one thing could get in or out,'' I said. ''Information, after all the modem was on.''

''Information can't kill anyone.''

I laughed. ''Try telling that to the Wall Street financiers who took the big dive when they heard the market had crashed! It's too messy to have been suicide I know, but suppose someone spiked the computer by phone? Rolab and Multiprise have wanted Moxon off the scene for years.''

''Industrial assassination. Why not? This new computer was to make the opposition look antiquated. Maybe they killed him to steal the memory map.''

''Good idea. Not umbrella poison; but a few grains of berserker toxin in his coffee might make a man feel crazy enough to run through the wall. We'll see when the lab reports are back.'' I stood and gathered up Moxon's notes. ''You never know, maybe the computer did it. That would be a change from the butler!''

I'd reason to regret that quip next morning. I was still brushing snow from my collar in the Department foyer when Garfield, my assistant, grabbed me.

''Look at the paper, Danny!'' he said, holding page one of the 'Times and Star' before my eyes.

''MOXON'S MONSTER!'' screamed the headline over a half-page pic of the chalk-silhouetted body.

I groaned. ''Someone's been reading too much Bierce.''

''Who's he?'' Garfield asked.

''Was. One of the greats, like Chandler and Archer.''

''Hey, I don't read classics.''

I chuckled. ''Philistine. He wrote a story about a chess cyborg throttling its inventor.''

I read on. 'Murder machine mangles micro mogul in basement bloodbath' the text went on, then went downhill into Luddite rantings.

''How'd they get past the guards to take the photo?''

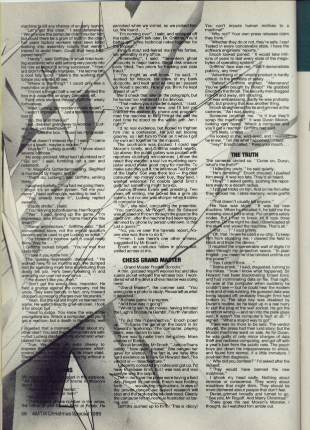
CAMERA MOUSE

''Look at the angle — they sent a camera mouse through the ventilator.''

''To think there's no law against printing this stuff!''

I tugged a lock of hair at the back of my neck. ''I'm worried,'' I admitted. ''These days, who knows? I want to see a smart machine in action. Show these notes to the super' if you find anything in them, I'm off to the Moxon labs.''

The air was full of knives at Moxon Industries. The news splash might be conjecture, but it had thrown enough dirt on their wonder



machine to kill any chance of an early launch.

"Let's get this clear," I said defensively. "We all know the computer didn't murder him, but could there be a grain of truth in the idea? For years factory workers have been killed walking into assembly robots that weren't trained to avoid them. Could that have happened here?"

"Hardly", said Griffiths, a small tired-looking academic who was settling very poorly into his role as Moxon's acting successor. "Howard didn't make silly mistakes." He led me into a cool tidy room. "Here's the working prototype you wanted to see."

"Where is the thing?" I could only see a matchbox on a desk.

"I'm not a thing! I haff a name!" shrilled the box in a voice like an angry Germanic elf.

Faint pride showed through Griffiths' weary furtiveness.

"Meet Ludwig, our resident music expert."

I wasn't impressed. "Just a mainframe voice box?"

"No, this is all there is!"

I sat, disbelief giving way to wonder. "Ludwig, as in van Beethoven?"

"Ja", said the box. "Music iss my speciality."

"That doesn't interest me," I said. "I came about a death, maybe a murder."

"Murder?" Ludwig queried. "I know about several of those."

My scalp prickled. What had I stumbled on? "Go on!" I said, fumbling out a pen and notebook.

"In Wagner's Gotterdammerung, Siegfried is murdered by Hagen, and in . . ."

"That'll do, Ludwig", said Griffiths, smiling thinly.

I laughed ruefully. "You had me going there, I forgot it's an expert system. Tell me your name", I said on impulse, wanting to test it.

"You already know it", Ludwig replied sweetly.

"Etaoin shrdlu", I said.

"You're trying to confuse me, Herr Rogoff."

"Yes", I said, giving up the game. "I'm impressed, was Moxon's home machine this smart?"

"Same architecture," Griffiths said. "But conventional store, not the crystal quantum devices we've used to get Ludwig so small."

"Sir Howard's nephew said it could really think. Was he . . . ?"

Griffiths looked bilious. "You've met that crazy kid?"

"I take it you know him."

The queasy expression deepened. "He worked here 'til six months ago. We dumped him for spending more time adventuring than doing his job. He's been breaking in and wrecking our user net ever since . . ."

"He doesn't like you, then."

"Don't get the wrong idea, Inspector. He held a grudge against the company, not his uncle. They were friends. In fact, only Howard stopped us pressing charges over his pranks."

"Yeah. But the kid still might've blamed him some. He wasn't exactly grief-stricken. I took it for shock, but . . ."

"Hard to judge. You know the way some youngsters are. Wreck a computer, and you'd get a reaction; but a death in the family, we'll . . ."

I digested that a moment. "What about my other idea? You said these computers are safe — but Ludwig disobeyed my command when I asked his name."

"True. We [illegible] extra cheeky to impress [illegible]. But computers which control [illegible] far more staid. There's no [illegible] moving without a direct command [illegible]"

[illegible]NS

My [illegible] ged in the earpiece. "Mr. [illegible] of toxins in Moxon's blood [illegible]"

"N[illegible] lasted."

"[illegible] our man!"

"Wh[illegible]"

"There's [illegible] phone number in the notes, the office of one Ernest Errol at Rolab. He panicked when we visited, so we picked him up. We found . . ."

"I'm coming over", I said, and snapped off the radio. "We'll talk later, Dr. Griffiths. You'd better get some technical notes together for the inquest."

Errol, a stout red-haired man in his forties, sat miserably in my office.

"Interesting", I said. "Seventeen ghost accounts in major banks. Illegal disk erasure coils fitted. Two priors for hacking and data fraud."

"You might as well know," he said. "I worked for Moxon. He knew of my bank accounts, and kept quiet as long as I passed on Rolab's secrets. How d'you think he kept ahead of us?"

We'd check that later on the polygraph, but he looked too shattered to be devious.

"That makes you a murder suspect," I said. "You've got the know-how, and I'll bet you cracked his system by phone and programmed the machine to fling him at the wall the next time he stood by the waldo arm. Am I right?"

I'd no real evidence, but hoped to frighten him into a confession. He just sat looking gloomy, so I left him to think on it while I got my own act together for the inquest.

The courtroom was packed. I could see Moxon's family, and Griffiths seated nearby. Up above, the public gallery was packed with reporters clutching minicameras. I knew the result they wanted; a real live murdering computer would make good copy for months. To make sure they got it, the infamous Ted Enoch of the Users' Soc was there too — the best consumer rep money could buy, they said. I wanted evidence; I'd doubts about Errol's guilt, but something might turn up.

Justice Sheena Evans was presiding. Two years off retiring, she looked like a grim old sphinx, but no-one was sharper when it came to computer law.

"So", she said, concluding the preamble. "You conclude, Mr Rogoff, that Sir Edward was pushed or thrown through the glass by the robot arm, after the machine had been reprogrammed by phone by person unknown. Is that just a guess?"

"No, you've seen the forensic report. No-one else was there to do it."

"Hmm. I see there's one other witness, suggested by Mr Enoch . . ."

Enoch, an unctuous fellow in spivvy suit, smiled across at me.

CHESS GRAND MASTER

" . . . Grand Master Frankie Borodin."

A thin, goateed man in woollen hat and blue suede jacket entered the witness box. I wondered what the devil a chess master was doing here!

"Grand Master", the coroner said. "You were given a photo to study. Please tell us what it depicted."

"A chess game in progress."

"And how was it going?"

"White to win in six moves, having initiated the Lugh's Enclosure Gambit, Fourth Variation . . ."

"To put this in perspective," Enoch piped up. "This was the game on the board in Sir Howard's workshop. The computer, playing black, was certain to lose . . ."

There was a rustle from the gallery. More shades of Bierce.

"We all know this, Mr Enoch," Justice Evans called. "Now quiet, please!" She banged her gavel for silence. "The fact is, we have little hard evidence as to how Sir Howard died. The verdict is — misadventure."

I gloomily collected my notes and got up. I'd have to release Errol; but I was less and less sure he was the culprit.

Out in the foyer the press were having a field day. Ringed by cameras, Enoch was holding forth. ". . . resounding implications. In view of the proven danger, we expect research will stop and the prototypes be destroyed. Clearly the computer felt murderous frustration at losing, and . . ."

Griffiths pushed up to him. "This is idiocy! You can't impute human motives to a machine!"

"Why not? Your own press releases claim they think."

"Whether they do or not, they're safe, I say! Tested in every conceivable state. I have the software engineers' reports."

Enoch looked pained. "It would take millions of years to test every state of the megabytes of operating system!"

Griffiths' face was red. "We'll demonstrate publicly, any time!"

"Advertising of an unsafe product is hardly ethical. In the interests of safety . . ."

"Safety!" Griffiths snarled. "Mercenary! You've been bought by Rolab!" He grabbed Enoch by the throat. The security men dragged him off and away, still shouting.

It was embarassing. Sadly he was probably right, but proving that was another thing.

Enoch straightened his tie and grinned at the cameras. "As I was saying . . ."

Someone prodded me. "Is it true they'll scrap the machines?" It was Duran Moxon, looking very fazed. 'Wreck a computer and you'll get a reaction' Griffiths had said.

"It's likely. Unless . . ."

He looked at me, wild-eyed, and I realised he knew. "Tell me what happened," I said.

"Hey!" Enoch called. "Keep your mouth . . .

THE TRUTH

The cameras circled us. "Come on, Duran, what's the truth?"

"I killed my uncle," he said quietly.

"He's rambling!" Enoch shouted. I pushed him away. It was too late. They'd all heard.

"How?" I asked gently, pushing the reporters away to a decent radius.

"I played tricks on him. And on his firm after they sacked me. I stole memory, wrote graffiti . . ."

"That doesn't usually kill anyone."

His face was stony. "It was his new machine. When he installed it, he told me the messing about had to stop. Put on extra safety codes. But I had to break in! It took three months. On the night he died, I downloaded all the store and wiped the machine. That's all."

"And . . . ?" I said grimly.

"Oh, that. I knew he used a vu-chip. To keep him from stopping me, I cleared the field to black and froze the device."

I recalled the impenetrable wall of digits I'd seen through my projection specs. "In plain English, you mean he'd be blinded until he cut the power?"

"Yes. I didn't think . . ."

"Some prank," I said, disgusted, turning to the mikes. "Now I know what happened. Sir Howard had been blackmailing Ernest Errol, and had incriminating data on file. That night, he was at the computer when suddenly he couldn't see — but he could hear the modem tone and drives running. He guessed data was being tapped off; probably thought Errol had broken in. The stop key was disabled by Duran's routine, so he leapt up in a real hurry to pull the plug at the wall socket. He got the direction wrong — and ran into the plate glass wall. It wasn't the computer's fault at all." I sighed. "What a stupid way to go!"

There was no more to be said. The verdict stayed, the press had their lurid story; but the Moxon machines went on sale. As for Duran, he was guilty of only minor charges of data theft and reckless computing, and got off with a year's ban from the public nets. The psych boys put down his impassiveness to shock, and found him normal, if a little immature. I doubted that diagnosis.

"Why did you confess?" I'd asked after the inquest.

"They would have banned the new machines."

I shook my head sadly. Nothing about remorse or conscience. They worry about machines that might think. They should be more bothered about people that don't feel.

Duran grinned broadly and turned to go. "See you, Mr Rogoff. And Merry Christmas!"

There goes the real Moxon's Monster, I thought, as I watched him amble out.

MAKE A MERRY CHRISTMAS CARD FOR GREMLIN



20 RUNNERS UP TO RECEIVE ANY 1 GREMLIN GRAPHICS GAME.

Christmas time is always busy here at the Towers. Not content with making my life a misery they've roped in the chaps and chapesses from **Gremlin Graphics** to make it even worse. There'll be no carol singing for me this Christmas. Do you know what they've made me do? I tell you! The dirty rats have told me, not asked mind you, to make them their Chrissy card this year. To make it worse for simpering old me they've gone and cut the original design into to little bits — and they expect me to assemble the damned thing.

Well, I've decided to pull myself up and stand my ground and say in a big loud voice ''NO!''. This didn't really please the Doc Martened Pub Exec, Graeme Kidd, but I was relentious. Did I win? Did I heck! We've come to a kind of compromise . . .

If you would be ever so sweet and luverrly you can help me out by asembling the card for me. I would be very grateful. So grateful in fact that the vuluptuous Auntie Sue Quinn and Uncle Ian Stewart are offering some fabulous prizypoos to the first few personages who have their entry drawn from the broom cupboard bucket. The first prize is a well-in-excess of 300 quid's worth of a Philip's compact disc midi hi-fi system. But don't despair if you don't win that my little cherubs, coz as a second prize the Gremlin mob are offering a fabulous Sharp Ghetto blaster. A thrid prize will see a lucky person receive any 5 Gremlin Graphics games of their choice. And there is absolutely, not in any way, need to worry if you don't win either of those as 20 lucky runners up can each have a Gremlin game —in fact— any one they want. Brilliant!

JIGSAW CARD

Righty ho then boys and girls here's how to do it. (If you're worried about using those nasty sharp scissors then ask mummy to do it for you — okay?)

Best thing to do is to cut the whole muddled up montage out and stick it onto a bit of stiff card (Snip, snip, stick) and then cut it all up again ready to fit it back together again. If you don't want to ruin your magazine then photocopy the page. (All seems a bit pointless really, still!)

When you've made the card Stick it all down on another piece of paper and post your final result off to:

The Merry Jigsaw comp, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB

It must arrive by first post on January 8th so get to it.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

POST CODE ....

CIRCLE THE GAME YOU WOULD LIKE TO WIN IF IT COMES ON ITS OWN:

THE WAY OF THE TIGER *THING ON A SPRING*

BOUNDER *MONTY ON THE RUN* *JACK THE NIPPER*



Winners + Prizes

Well, dear readers, here I am again unveiling another mega listing of lucky winners. Life is one mega bout of chaos at present with everyone dashing around trying to do half a dozen jobs at once and poor Crumbly doing his best to slow down time itself so he can fit everything into his very tight Christmas schedule. Between you and I, I think his bottle is starting to go. He keeps muttering to himself!! Anyway, let's get down to business straight away with the names of all you lucky winners.

GREEN CHOMP COMP

PIRANAH's are well known for enjoying a quick nibble and Mandy Keyho, their fix it all person, decided that spinache is a delightful fast bite. *Popeye* quite enjoys the odd bit of the green veggie himself which keeps the doctor away and Brutus well under control. The only control exerted upon you in this competition, though, was to come up with some dialoge for our nautical hero. The three best entries each receive a Popeye Alarm Clock, a T shirt and a copy of the game and they are **P Herridge**, of The Hendre, NP3 4TH, **A Salisbury** of Lupin Way, CO16 7DX, and **Owen Newt**, of Heath Hurst Road, NW3 2RU. Well done to them and to the runners up who will all soon be enjoying their favourite cartoon character on the Amstrad.

POPEYE GAME WINNERS

Paul Martin, New Deacon Road, NG31 9JX; Stuart Jones, Wicklow Close, RG22 5BE; David Weir, Tarn Road, GU26 6TP; J D Potter, Rowthorne Lane, S44 5QE; Elaine Connor, Springfield Avenue, WA6 0BZ; Philip Bargh, Newbold Avenue, S41 7AR; Mark Wakelin, Holland Pines, RG12 9UY; Mike Nellist, Tunstall Road, TS18 5LX; Paul Newnham, Clevedon Road, Avon; Mr D Wiggins, Haig Crescent, DN11 0JT; Paul Irish, Ragleth Gardens, SY2 5RB; Amtix! Reader, Shortborough Avenue, HP17 9HT; Neil Galloway, Maitland Street, DD4 6RR; Lee Allen, Epsom Close, DA7 6DU; Amtix! reader, Gilling East, YO6 4HR; T Schofield, Bradley Road, HD2 1QY; Tony Mills, Brunswick Court, L41 6LW; Amtix! reader, Queen Street, RM7 9AU; Martin Jones, Victoria Road, TF11 8AE; Stan Fowell, Woodward Road, RM9 4SH; Steve Allibone, Sheridan Road, BN14 8ET; Martin Jeffrey, Ruskin Avenue, BB12 YT8; Eric Wilson, Eagles Lane, CB6 2TG; B Fletcher, King Edwards Grove, TW11 9LY; Clifford Langridge, Selhurst Road, SE25 5QB; P D Lavers, Bell Corner, TA4 1QS; Peter Toley, Magaretta Terrace, SW3 5NU; Marco Ciglia, Kathleen Road, SW11 2JR; Tony Vernon, Folkestone Road, Portsmouth; Chris Beltrami, Henryson Road, SE4 1HL.

SCOOBY DOOBY DOOOOOO!

It was out with the pretty pencils and gaudey gouche for the *Scooby Doo* competition and everyone that entered showed a diverse range of colours indeed whilst they added the finishing touches to Scooby and Shaggy. **Elite** were offering 50 copies of the *Scooby Doo* game to the 50 best colourers and after a prismatic search, we found the best fifty.

WINNERS

John Conway, Glenesk Drive, G53 7QN; Paul Schuricht, Southway, NW11 6RU; B Shallacross, Hulton Avenue, M28 6HJ; Glenn Todd, Castleway, NE13 7LS; A Salisbury, Lupin Way, CO16 7DX; Daniel Bridge, Evergreen Close, Devon; Chris Davies, Girton Road, NG5 1FY; Mark Warriner, Whitfield Avenue, YO18 7HY; Samantha Pitt, Hillary Drive, HR4 0RB; Warren Pearson, Selworthy Drive, CW1 3RS; Grant Tunnadine, Yr Ynys, LL36 0DW; Lyndsey Wilson, West View, ST3 7PH; Amtix Reader, Queen Street, RM7 9AU; H C Saunders, Elm Avenue, NG9 1BU; David Martin, Pytchley Way, NN6 9EF; Richard Lumb, Lynwood Crescent, LS26 8LJ; Steven Bostock, Westmorland Road, M31 1HN; John Veall, Ventnor Street, BD3 9JZ; J D Potter, Rowthorne Lane, S44 5QE; Lewis Slater, Southwold Mans, W9 2LF; Peter Rabbage, Newlands, EX7 0DY; Damian Raxach, Grosvenor Court, Herts; Tina Turford, Crankhall Lane, WS10 0EE; Robert Bird, Oak Road, B70 8HE; Marco Ciglia, Kathleen Road, SW11 2JR; Alan Russell, Doverhay, TA24 8PT; Paulo Anaia, Sherbrooke Road, SW6 7QL; Roman's Hotel, Southwick, BN4 4NG; Kevin Burke, Kingsway, Lancs; Mathew Welbourn, Beckford Road, GL20 8NL; Peter Bramwell, Davenport Gardens, BL1 2LL; Gordon Hayward, Bracknell Grove, LU3 2LT; Daniel Goldsack, Maudlin Lane, BN4 3PR; Lee Sumners, Brynlluan, SA14 7HS; Victoria Reynolds, Rolleston Road, SO4 1GB; David Gibbon, Quarry Gardens, DH7 7DR; Damian Kelly, Bransdale Avenue, CU6 4LW; A J Philpott, Fordwich Rise, SG14 2DF; Richard Harrison, Ashgrove, CF4 1BE; Andrew McShane, Lingfield Walk, NN18 9JS; P Smaje, Uppingham, WN8 8HG; David J Reid, Burnside Gardens, AB2 5QW; Mark R Long, Blunts Hall Road, CM8 1ER; Ernest Nelson, Jocelyn Gardens, BT6 9BA; Tony Glynn, Gretna Road, CV3 6DT; Andrew Ashley, Portland Road, OX2 7EY; Jon Russell, Wisden Road, SG1 5JJ; Theo Moye, Old Harlow, CM17 0DU; Elaine Connor, Springfield Avenue, WA6 0BZ; Rebecca Gibbs, Green Lane, S18 6LN.

STRIKE FORCE AMTIX!

PIRANHA were certainly giving you all orders to fire at will when they asked you write a Strike Force Cobra style dossier on the team you would send to infiltrate AMTIX! Towers. Well, there was no shortage of mercenary looking nasties who were ready to join the cause. The two best entries, however, will be jetting off to Combat Zone resplendent in their **PIRANHA** T shirts as they annihilate members of AMTIX! with nasty, sticky red paint. Their winning entries are displayed here and they belong to **Philip Gates**, of Cumberland Avenue, RG22 4BQ and **Peter White** of Nottingham Close, S31 7BP. The runners up will all receive a copy of *Strike Force Cobra*.

WINNERS OF THE GAME

Miss Karen Marshall, Derby Road, DE55 1BG; D Newnham, Aspen Close, BR8 7UB; Andrew Williams, Riccarton Drive, EH14 5PN; Richard Kirkman, Sidcup Hill, DA14 6JA; John Conway, Glen Esk Drive, G53 7QN; Graeme Rogan, Kilburn Close, RG3 7DH; David Blyth, Kevington Drive, NR32 3JL; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; Jon Russell, Wisden Road, SG1 5JJ; G M Harrison, Burnt Oak Lane, DA15 9DE; David Heath, Kensworth Close, ST5 3LH; P Newman, Clevedon Road, BS23 1DD; Nicholas Hunt, Oakhill Road, S18 6EJ; Iain Bage, Whitburn Road, SR6 7QS; Jonathon Boast, Brigg, DN20 9PG; Vernon Hatten, Edale Close, SK7 6JZ; Andrew Johnson, Bishopsthorpe Road, SE26; Andrew Denby, Ivah Farm, LA2 8QZ; Dean Buckland, Barnwell Street, Northants; Ian Burke, Sophy Street, SR5 1RZ; Philip Harrison, Villa Road, SS7 5QL; D A Bullock, Charlwood Road, LU4 0BU; Frank Gniadkowski, Birdbrook Road, B44 8RE; Alan Davies, Beaumaris Drive, NP44 8JA; Robert Hallett, Hollyfield Close, HP23 5PL; Stephen Humphreys, Boode Croft, L28 4EW; Tony Vernon, Folkestone Road, PO3 6LR; Darren Green, Blunts Road, SE9 1HX; Michael Aldridge, Catherton, TF3 1YX; Nicholas Johnson, Storeton Road, L43 5TN; D Voux Nobes, Winstree, SS13 1PG; T Maher, Kilmailing Road, G44 5UJ; M Feathers, Sanstone Road, WS3 3SD; Martin Poole, Hazelbank Road, SE6 1LW; Michael Nicholson, Tyne Terrace, SR8 3JY; Keith Mason, Hawkesworth Street, Liverpool; I Mingham, Trezaise Close, Cornwall; Nathan Havell, Belchamp Road, CO9 4JT; J Smith, Honeysuckle Road, SO2 3BW; Ian Berriman, Birch Drive, HU10 6LB; Martin Fox, Summerhill Drive, BT17 0RE; Oliver Scott, Brackley, KT13 0BL; John Soonaye, Kendal Court, CW12 4JN; G J Bostock, Westmoreland Road, M31 1HN; Ricardo Sueiras, Solent Close, SO41 9ST; Rhett Middleton, Talsarn, SA48 8QW; Kevin Patton, Wharfdale, HP2 5TG.

(SC)ROLLING ALONG

Electric Dreams asked you do give us your impression of what you thought Tony Clarke's favourite snack, a hardware (sc)roll looked like. Well, there was a small shortage of entries which means that 13 copies of the superb game *TEMPEST* will have to stay at home - You silly people who decided not too enter because "I never win anything", got it all wrong. Ah well, at least the people who did enter will be able to enjoy playing *Tempest* from the comfort of their own homes.

TEMPEST WINNERS

Michael Dunn, Rangemore Drive, BN21 2UB; Rhett Middleton, Talsarn, SA48 8QW; Keith Crow, Lauder Close, GU16 5SX; Quiffed, Alder Close, AL2 2RR; Jon Russell, Wisden Road, SG1 5JJ; Ian James, Axminster Close, NE23 9UB; John Sholicar, Coronation Road, GL52 3DA; John Burd, Sandcroft, TF7 4AD; Robert Hallett, Hollyfield Close, HP2 5PL; Martin Fox, Summerhill Driv, BT17 0RE; Mr Eric Wilson, Eagles Lane, CB6 2TG; G Greenway, Balcastle Close, B15 3UE; Jarrod Clancy, Samber Close, PE19 3QG; Mark Putterill, Melford Close, S75 6EF; Debbie L Bainbridge, Markenfield Road, HG3 2TR; Nadeem R Mufti, Zetland Road, DN2 5EL; John Conway, Glen Esk Drive, G53 7QN; Ian Douglas, Kinnaird Crescent, PL6 6JT; Lewis Slater, Southwold Man's, W9 2LF; Chris Beltrami, Henryson Road, SE4 London 1HL; Miss Karen Marshall, Derby Road, DE55 1BG; Ian Berriman, Birch Drive, HU10 6LB; Timothy Hanitzsch, Chockleys Drive, TF1 4TS; Richard Spence, Tullynore Road, BT26 6QE; Michael Man, Bearncroft, NW8 9HG; Steven Lipsomb, Thorncroft, RM11 1EU; Graemé Taylor, Deveron Road, G74 2HR; Laurence Fumagalli, Sandhills, LS14 3DN; Paul Edwards, Mildmay Road, SG1 5TW; Nathan Havell, Belchamp Road, CO9 4JT; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; Sam Maldram, Amersham Road, HP9 2UG; Leich Christian, Fawsley Leys, CV22 5QZ; P Newnham, Clevedon Road, BS23 1DD; Alex Viat-Fotzi, Heath Hurst Road, NW3 2RU; R Viswanathan, Cranbourne Road, E15 2DB; Stephen Humphreys, Boode Croft, L28 4EW.

DE NAME'S BUGSY

CRL, asked everyone to dangle a carrot in front of each of the AMTIX! minions that would have them all trotting merrily around. This was a competition that everyone got their teeth into and there was a barrow full of ideas.

Unfortunately, only one of you could win their very own 3ft cuddly bunny and **Graeme Rogan**, of Kilburn Close, RG3 7DH is the lucky winner who will have to build a very large hutch in which to keep his prize. The 30 runners up will have less work to do to accommodate their prizes as a copy of *Bugsy* should fit very nicely into their datacorders thank you very much!

BUGSY WINNERS

Robert Hallett, Hollyfield Close, HP23 5PL; Ian Berriman, Birch Drive, HU10; Miss Karn Marshall, Derby Road, DE55 1BG; Jarrad Clancy, Sambar Close, PE19 3QG; John Sholicar, Coronation Road, GL52 3DA; Daryl Ward, Newbury Close, LE8 2JJ; Vernon R Hatton, Edale Close, SK7 6JZ; Nicholas Johnson, Storeton Road, L43 5TN; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; G J Bostock, Westmorland Road, M31 1HN; Steven Lipscomb, Thorncroft, RM11 1EU; Michael Nicholson, Tyne Terrace, SR8 3JY; Steve Reardon, Beatty Gardens, CM7 6TA; Jimmy Davies, Chelmer Road, CM8 2EY; Debbie L Bainbridge, Markenfield Road, HG3 2TR.

POWER EXTREME!

Albums! Books! Games! T-Shirts! Courtesy of ARIOLASOFT ALL Up For Grabs!







Ever watch *CENTURIONS*? It's a great new super duper cartoon featuring some really mighty heroes who are always around to save the day. Three clean living guys and one super fido dedicated to the defence of you and I against the evil alien hordes that attack earth the same time every Saturday morning. Sounds like it'd make a good computer game, doesn't it? Well that's exactly what **Ariolasoft** think — at this very moment they are converting the antics and adventures of the *CENTURIONS* into a thrilling new game.

In the meantime **Ariolasoft** have decided to donate some goodies to give to you, the best of which is an **Ariolasoft** Goody Bag. This package consists of several desirable objects, including five faberooni record albums, three great books, four **Ariolasoft** games, a Centurion model and four swell Tee Shirts! Mere words alone cannot describe this prize so take a look at the piccy on this page and gasp away. Generous Ariola have also given us twenty five tee shirts for you oh-so-lucky readers. Interested? Well we're going to make you work for this one. Here's the competition . . .

Despite the prestigious title of AMTIX! Editor and the maturity his job requires, Mr Crumbly Harding is well into CENTURIONS. You should see him run up and down the office shouting 'Power Extreme!', pretending the office dustbin is an alien robot. Biff! Bap! Bop! he goes, laying into the bin with a manic gleam in his eyes. A few kicks and a punch later the evil bin is defeated, no longer will he and his rubbish hordes tyranize the office. Malcolm then pops into the toilet with a smug look on his face only to return thirty seconds later in his mild mannered AMTIX! Editor secret identity. This is all getting a bit tedious as Mr Malcolm's antics do tend to spread rubbish about the place, and though his Centurion imitations are entertaining to say the least, we do value his abilities as an Editor a bit more.

This is where you can help. The plan is to booby trap the office dustbin in some way so as to give Malcolm a real shock next time he tries to do battle with it. It has to be a big shock though, hopefully a big enough shock to curtail his bin bashing career indefinitely. Just design a Malcolm Harding frightener that will sit nice and innocently in the bin until attacked, then it should burst into scary animation. Send the design to us and the creator of the best anti-Crumbly device will have his or her efforts rewarded with an Ariola Goody Bag. The best of the rest will receive one of the twenty five T-Shirts. So get cracking and send your entries to **STOP CRUMBLY PRATTING ABOUT, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive before the 8th of January 1987, and fill in the form below so we can send you the correct T Shirt size should you be a winner!

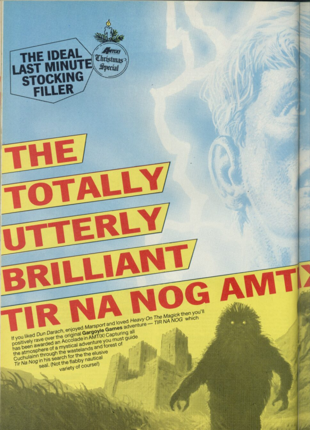
Name ....

Address ....

....

.... **Post Code** ....

T SHIRT SIZE (S, M or L) ....


THE IDEAL LAST MINUTE STOCKING FILLER
AMTIX! Christmas Special
THE TOTALLY UTTERLY BRILLIANT TIR NA NOG AMTIX
If you liked Dun Darach, enjoyed Marsport and loved Heavy On The Magick then you'll positively rave over the original Gargoyle Games adventure — TIR NA NOG which has been awarded an Accolade in AMTIX! Capturing all the atmosphere of a mystical adventure you must guide Cuchulainn through the wastelands and forest of Tir Na Nog in his search for the the elusive seal. (Not the flabby nautical variety of course!)



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The Legendary Celtic Adventure Launches itself on The Amstrad through your favourite magazine!
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If you want to enter the magical world of Cuchulainn and the ape—like Sidhe then fill in the form, enclosing a cheque made payable to Newsfield Ltd and send it post haste to:
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RICHARD EDDY PROUDLY PRESENTS . . .

SO YOU

MEGA PROG

The Making Of FIRELORD

Hewson's new arcade adventure game

●It is not a name you'll immediately recognise but when I mention the Amstrad version of *Dragontorc of Avalon* and the *Zapp Assembler* it might just ring a bell. Keith has been working on the Amstrad version of **Hewson**'s *Firelord* for six months now and has kept a diary of his progress. That diary, for the first time, can be revealed here in AMTIX! to give all you would-be programmers an idea of the hard work that actually goes into producing such a game. Read on!

A subject that I've always thought about, and I'm sure many of you have, is how a game is actually produced: from the conception of an idea to a glossy box sitting neatly on a shop shelf. We all have, in the back of the minds, some idea of the pressures — and the rewards — involved in producing a finished product whether it be a magazine, an assignment or a computer game. But do any of us really understand the frustration, and eventual pleasure, that goes into it? I doubt if the vast majority of people really do know the lowdown. One man who certainly has gone through the process many a time is **Keith Prosser**.

JUNE 1986

Pyracurse, for the Spectrum, was still fighting back, with bugs crawling out from everywhere when Steve Crow turned up with the preliminary version of *Firelord*. And very pretty it looked too, lots of nice colours and medieval street scenes. I took a few seconds off *Pyracurse* to waggle a joystick. I return to *Pyracurse*, hating it, when the **Boss**, Andrew Hewson tells me I'm going to convert *Firelord* to the Amstrad — and I thought I was earning a rest with *Pyracurse* — I was working 30 hours a day, 8 days a week on it!

As usual my entreaties were to no avail. Andrew hit me into submission, but fortunately I was allowed to finish *Pyracurse* first. My mate, John, from Scotland started work on the Commodore version of *Firelord*. I watched him streak ahead as I was still stuck in the midst of *Pyracurse* — It managed to crash on the very last task after playtesting for hours — and no-one knew why! More sleepless nights! Programmers at **Hewson** are required to sleep at least once a week — whether they need it or not.

John had the backgrounds and our heroic *Firelord* on the screen before I even started, and began to look too smug for his own good. Once *Pyracurse* was finally perfect I had just enough time to catch a quick breath before beginning on *Firelord*. Mark Goodall, my collaborator on *Pyracurse*, is a BBC programmer at heart and had to break after his stint on *Pyracurse* as there was nothing for him to do on the BBC. I'd rather be an Amster than a Beeb-basher any day! But watching him put his feet up made me wonder if I hadn't taken a wrong turn somewhere along the line.

JULY

The method decided on for *Firelord* was for Steve to do all the game development and for John and I to convert it as it came from him. It seemed quite a good idea at the time, so we organised a system for transferring codes, which came from Steve on Spectrum microdrives, into the BBC micro. From there it could easily be transferred onto the C64 and the Amstrad.

To convert a Spectrum program on to the Amstrad was not too bad. A lot of the code worked unmodified. The problems were that the colour worked in a different way, and twice as many bytes had to be onto the screen for the Amstrad. Graphics data also needed to be bigger on the Amstrad, and coupled with the bigger screen the apparent extra RAM (64k versus 48k) soon disappeared. More bytes to plot on the screen also meant it was more difficult to keep within the 20ms time limit — which basically had to be done to avoid screen flicker. These problems were for the future as yet. First I had to get the backgrounds up, and the basic control working.

As John was ahead of me I could pick his brain, which I did shamelessly. As he had to laboriously convert each Z80 instruction into the equivalent 6502 I made rapid progress and managed to catch him up . . .

Steve is a very disciplined programmer and documents his program very well, which made things easier for me. I could usually tell which bits of the program were going to need major surgery, and I knew what I needed to do. It was almost pleasant to convert some bits — but I was worried that I just couldn't get the variety of colours possible on the Spectrum using the Amstrad four colour mode, but that was what had been decided on and so I had to get that right.

AUGUST

Converting the code consisted of identifying the machine specific sections, ie, the key scanning, screen handling and sound. That meant changing those parts, while leaving the non-specific gameplay sections unchanged. For example, Steve used the attribute colour memory of the Spectrum for collision detection. The best solution for this was to have a 'pseudo attribute' file area of memory in the Amstrad. It meant another 768 bytes used up, but it couldn't be helped.

There was another constraint. I might not have been able to do everything that Steve could do in the 20ms time limit because of the extra graphics handling. I had to wait to see how it went. The original graphic data in the Spectrum couldn't be used unmodified on the Amstrad. Each byte had to be expanded, with a bit of code to expand them on demand. Pre-expanding is quicker at run time but uses more space, while expanding on demand is slow but compact . . . It was all a question of getting the balance right. Locations and basic control proved fairly straightforward. The hero originally stuttered across the screen, but that was my fault. A small fix to the routine put that right.

Problems began to surface later. Because Steve was developing the program whenever he made a

U WANNA BE A GRAMMER HUH!



change we had to match it and it proved difficult to be sure that we had covered all the changes, so it was almost necessary to restart everytime a new version came from Steve. If the code hadn't changed the data had, oh dear, this isn't fun any more . . .

SEPTEMBER

There were two main parts to *Firelord* — the running around shooting at things bit and the trading screen bit. So far John and I had concentrated on the running around bit, except the 'alien' sub routines, which control the monsters that Steve hadn't finished yet. I began on 'house' — the bit to do with trading — on my own as John was still reconverting the last version. I began to enjoy life again, as I saw someone suffering more than I was! This 'house' bit was okay, I decided.

Hmmm, why couldn't I trade. Because I couldn't pick anything up — why couldn't I? Because there was a bug somewhere - life? Don't talk to me about life . . .

Before I could worry too much about picking up objects, yet another new version arrived from Steve. John moaned and gibbered in the corner as he pondered the changes that all this brought.

Then I had a system by which I could add his source files to the format of my *Zapp assembler* like a few more edits, insert some routines for the Amstrad and away I went. Unfortunately it didn't mean that the program would run, or anything like that. It just took the donkey work out, so I could concentrate on finding out what was wrong. Working late that night. (Again!) I wondered if perhaps I could invent a system to tell me what was wrong while I got on with the donkey work!

OCTOBER

The final version of the code and data should have been arriving any day and then I could instal the final changes. Then it was play testing time for several days before the public had their chance to brave the perils of *Firelord*. All in all I enjoyed it, but I think I would have enjoyed a holiday much more! Perhaps I can have one now, just a small one, eh? Andy? Oh, you want some stuff on the 8256 next? I see, fine . . . ●

KEITH PROSSER



GO FLYING WITH DURELL!

WIN A RADIO CONTROLLED AEROPLANE AND TAKE TO THE SKIES

50 COPIES OF DEEP STRIKE FOR RUNNERS UP

DURELL really are quite a clever bunch of chappies when it comes to themes for games. With *Turbo Esprit* they had lots of sleek, fast movement along the ground but now they seem to have taken to the skies with *Deep Strike* where the player is firmly sat at the business end of a bi-plane fighter of the First World War. Your task is to protect the bombers of the group as they fly into enemy territory to shake up the enemy ground forces. What you have to do is to shoot down the enemy fighters that are sent out to bring a premature end to the bombing mission and therefore guard them against an untimely detonation of their precious cargoes.

Great! Wouldn't Mummy minion have been proud of me had I risked life and limb to shadow my comrades from the slings and arrows of outrageous enemy aeroplanes.

She could, however, feel just as proud of me in my role at AMTIX! Towers. There is many a time that my quick thinking has saved a writing minion or two a lot of trouble . . .

Tony Clarke spends all his time POKEing around his computer trying out new ways of extending an otherwise short life. I help him by deflecting the odd missile that sometimes wings towards him from the massed ranks of the posing prima donnas of the ZZAP! squadron. I mean, just 'cos his hairs not all spikey, they all seem to think that he's from a different planet!

And what of Richard? Many's the time I've seen him crawl forth from the door of the local Ludlothian Indian Curryhouse on his hands and knees, unable to stand under the weight of his bloated and severely distended stomach I've got him safely home each time by borrowing a passing bath chair (oops sorry Malcolm!) AAAAGGHHH! and wheeling him gently down the hill.

And Malcolm may be a dab hand at pulling wheelies from the imaginary start line of the office as he races towards the victor's finishing post situated in the car park of the Pig and Ball Bearings, but the maintenance of his Editor's bathchair is severely lacking and time after time I've tightened up a few loose bolts that could've meant the difference between wheeled conveyance and him owning a pristine set of white saintly wings.

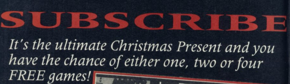
But I digress. You want to know what you have to do to win your own pair of radio controlled wings, don't you? Yes you do. Right, it's quite simple really. All you have to do is spot the differences between the two pictures of an aerial combat sequence, seen on this very page. Then send your entry by airmail to **DEEP STRIKE, AMTIX! SQUADRON, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here by the 8th of January.

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ADDRESS ....

....

.... POST CODE ....



SECTION A

From GREMLIN GRAPHICS

THE AMTIX! ACCOLADES!

Watch out it's the fabulous four all together on one compilation tape.

STARQUAKE
Bubble Bus's amazing arcade adventure which features the cute hero Blob. Fly around the world, collect pieces of the planet's core, and assemble them at the centre. All great fun!

MONTY ON THE RUN
The return of the famous mole in an all action platform game with some of the most amazing music. Richard called it ''A great game'' with Glenn saying it was ''A game for platform freaks everywhere!''

SWEEVO'S WORLD
From the Gargoyle Games fun label comes one of the most detailed and compulsive Arcade adventures ever. Full of comedy, and very frustrating, it proved popular with nearly every reviewer under the sun.

BOUNDER
Smash hit, all original arcade game. Guide Bounder across the dangerous planes in an attempt to reach the goal. Originally hailed as ''An excellent game which is very addictive'' this comment was reinforced last month as a ''Well jolly game''

Amtix Christmas Special

SECTION B

From OCEAN/IMAGINE

PART ONE:

Choose any one of these brand new games!

LEGEND OF KAGE
Another new arcade conversion. Pit your wits and battle strength against another group of war torn Ninja's. Starting off in a dense forest kill off all your opponents with your bare hands — if you can find a mystical book cast a spell that will wipe them out. Venturing on you will have make your way up a balcony and into a great house. All manner of nasties are found here — and they all need obliterating!

KONAMI'S GOLF
The masters of the arcades turn their hands to an exciting simulation. Golf features all the regular stuff of a normal play but the inevitable Konami touch. All sounds good stuff.

TOP GUN
Top Gun puts you in the fighter pilot's seat of an American F-14 Tomcat fighter aircraft. Vector graphics allow 1 or 2 players to take part in the action or you can play against the computer. Your armaments in this nerve tingling aerial duel are heat seeking missiles and a 20 mm rapid fire cannon. Fact action great graphics. Dare you enter the danger zone?

YIE AR KUNG FU II
The great follow up to the game that's been riding high in the Top 20 for many, many, many months. Yie Ar II features 8 different opponents. Guide your fighter through many screens of action and adventure until you reach the wizard on level 8. Sounds like a very worthy follow up.



NOMAD AND RAMBO

NOMAD
An accolade way back in the spring. Guide your colourful NOMAD through a hideously endowed maze until you reach the Great Meanie at the end. Eliminate him and the world will be saved! ''A real first class product from Ocean''.

RAMBO
Take the lead as Stallone in this raid on an enemy camp. Take your pick from the selection of weapons — the more powerful the weapon the more nasty meanies will come after you. Rambo achieved a worthy score of 73% when reviewed in May, and it's still good fun now.

PART TWO

Golden Oldies: Choose one of the two groups

BATMAN AND DALEY THOMPSON'S SUPERTEST
Batman — one of the most significant pieces of Amstrad software to get a coveted AMTIX! Accolade it really was superb. As Batman make your way through the labyrinth of Batcaves collecting various devices to enable you to re-assemble the batmobile and rescue your bat-pal Robin.

SUPERTEST
Compete in a total of eight events including, pistol shooting, cycling, diving, slalom, rowing, penalties, ski jump and Tug o' war. Rated at 84% originally it's still a great, if not one of the best, track 'n' field events.



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( ) **YIE AR KUNG FU II**
( ) **TOP GUN**
( ) **LEGEND OF KAGE**

OR

PART TWO - TICK ONE ONLY

Yes please I'd love the following free with my subscription . . .

( ) **BATMAN** and **SUPER TEST**
( ) **NOMAD** and **RAMBO**

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AND I LIVE AT ....

....

....

.... *POSTCODE* ....

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I wish to pay by Visa/Access (delete as applicable)

Signature ________________

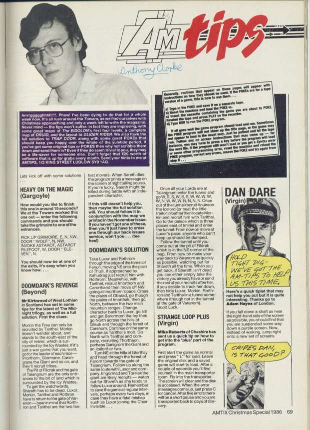
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Send your payment to AMTIX! Subscription Offer, Fairview, 47 Gravel Hill, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1QS.



Arrrrggggghhhh!!!!. Phew! I've been dying to do that for a whole week now. It's all rush around the *Towers*, as we find ourselves with Christmas approaching and only a week left to write the magazine. Never mind — the tips won't suffer. In fact they are improving, with some great maps of *The EIDOLON*'s first four levels, a complete map of *DRUID*, and the layout to *GLIDER RIDER*. We also have the full solution to *TRAP DOOR*, along with some great POKEs that should keep you happy over the whole of the yuletide period. If you've got some original tips or POKES then why not scribble them down and send them in? Even if they do seem trivial to you, they may be a life-saver for someone else. Don't forget that £20 worth of software that is up for grabs every month. Send your hints to me at AMTIPS, 1/2 KING STREET LUDLOW SY8 1AQ.

Generally, routines that appear on these pages will appear with instructions on how they should be used. If the POKEs are for a tape version of a game, this is how to use them . . .

a) Type in the POKE and save it on a separate tape.
b) Reset the machine and load the POKE in.
c) Insert the cassette containing the game you are about to POKE. Rewind the tape and press PLAY on the recorder.
d) Type RUN to run the POKE program.

If all goes well the game program should load and run. Sometimes the POKE program will not show up the title page, or the game may not appear to load in the usual way. Just be patient and let the tape run. Follow any on screen instructions that may come up — for instance, you may have to press a key before the program will load the next file. If the program still won't load or you get a *Syntax error* or some other programming error, reset the machine and reload the POKE program, correct any errors, resave the POKE and try again from step B . . .

Lets kick off with some solutions . . .

HEAVY ON THE MAGIC (Gargoyle)

How would you like to finish this one in around 15 seconds? We at the Towers worked this one out — enter the following commands and you should take the grimoire to one of the entrances.

PICK UP GRIMOIRE, E, N, NW, DOOR ''WOLF'', N, NW, INVOKE ASTAROT, ASTAROT PILEFOOT, W, DOOR ''ELEVEN'', N.

You should now be at one of the exits, it's easy when you know how. . . .

DOOMDARK'S REVENGE (Beyond)

Mr Kirkwood of West Lothian in Scotland has set in some tips for the latest of The Midnight trilogy, as well as a full solution. First the clues:

Morkin the Free can only be recruited by Tarithel. Morkin doesn't wander about, and stands to the south-east of the city of Imiriel, which is surrounded by the Icy Wastes. If it's just a war game that you want, go for the leader of each race — Imorthorn, Glormane, Carangrane the Giant and so on, and they'll recruit tribes.

The Pit of Fildrak and the gate of Talangrium are the only entrances to the bit of land which is surrounded by the Icy Wastes.

To get the watchwords, Shareth has to be dead, Luxor, Morkin, Tarithel and Rothron have to return to the gate of Varenon — bear in mind that Rorthron and Tarithel are the two fastest movers. When Sareth dies the program prints a message on the screen at night telling you so. If you're lucky, Sareth might be killed during battle with an independent character.

If this still doesn't help you, then maybe the full solution will. You should follow it in conjunction with the map we printed in the November issue. If you haven't got one of these, then you'll just have to order one through our back issues service, won't you . . . (tee hee!)

DOOMDARK'S SOLUTION

Take Luxor and Rothrom through the edge of the forest of Fenun, moving NE onto the plain of Thuiil. If approached by Kahudrag just recruit him with Rothrom. Meanwhile, with Tarithel, recruit Imorthorn and Carorthand then move off NW going at Imorthorn's pace. Cross the plains of Obarad, go though the plains of Imorthak, then go North, between the two main mountain ranges. Change character back to Luxor, go NE and get Berormorn the fey then go North across the hills of Glisuk and through the forest of Carehorn. Continue on the same course as Tarithel's mob. Go North with Tarithel and company, recruiting Thortheon, perhaps Ganigrom the Giant and an Icelord or two.

Turn NE at the hills of Glorthay and head through the forest of Farorn towards the gate of Talangrium. Follow up along the same route with Luxor and company. Imgormad and Torelak the giant are likely recruits — watch out for Shareth as she tends to follow Luxor around. Remember to save the game at regular intervals, perhaps every two days, in case they have a fatal mishap such as Luxor joining the Choir Invisible . . .

Once all your Lords are at Talangrium enter the tunnel and go W, S, S, W, S, S, W, W, W, W, W, N, W, W, W, N, N, N, N. Once out of the tunnel recruit Anuireon the Icelord (or beat the little traitor in battle) then locate Morkin and recruit him with Tarithel. Go to the palace which is three places east of Imiriel and enter the tunnel. From now on move at Luxor's pace: anyone who can't keep up should be dumped.

Follow the tunnel until you come out at the pit of Fildrak which is in the NE corner of the map. From now on make your way back to Varenorn as quickly as possible, watching out for Shareth all the time. When you get back, if Shareth isn't dead you can either simply take the victory you already have or send the rest of your recruits after her. If you decide to track her down, then hide Luxor, Morkin, Rorthron and Tarithel in a tunnel somewhere (though not in the tunnel at the gate of Varenorn). Good Luck.

STRANGE LOOP PLUS (Virgin)

Mike Roberts of Cheshire has sent us a quick tip on how to get into the 'plus' part of the program.

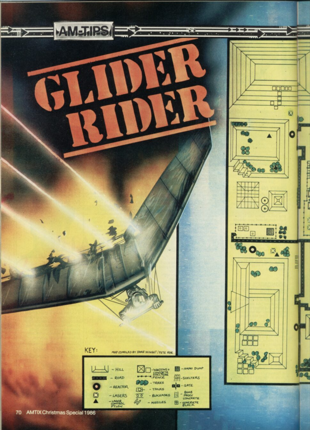
First start the game as normal and press ''L'' for load. Leave the original disk and a saved game will start to load. After a couple of seconds you'll find yourself in the main transporter room. Fly into the transporter. The screen will clear and the disk is accessed. When the error messages come up, just press C for cancel. After five errors there will be a short pause and you are transported back to days of *Sorcery*.

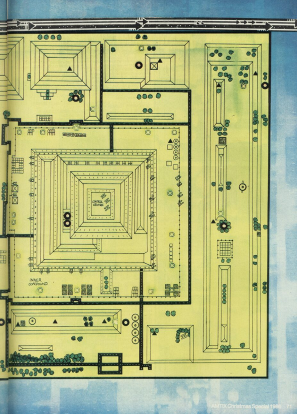
DAN DARE (Virgin)

Here's a quick tiplet that may not help you out but it is quite interesting. Thanks go to Adam Hayes of London.

If you fall down a shaft as near the right-hand side of the screen as possible, you should find that you are suspended some way down a purple screen. Now, instead of walking, jump right onto a new set of screens.

GLIDER RIDER




CONTROL CENTRE
INNER COMPOUND

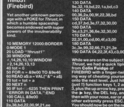
V
(Ocean)

Just lying around the office were some hints for **V**. It's a pity that I don't know who sent them, but thanks anyway, whoever you are.

```
When in circuit mode

Change 1 and 6
Change 1 and 5
Change 2, 4 and 6
Change 1 and 4
Change 2 and 6
Change 2 and 3

Pause/Quit
Red Dust Formula
Change Circuit Mode (for unlocking doors)
Your Location
Set Bomb
Get Back to normal (off switch)
0 - Locates Lab
1 - Locates Major targets.
2 - Locates transmit in - use with locator
3 - Locates transit out
4
5
```

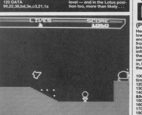


THRUST
(Firebird)

Yet another unknown personage with a POKE for *Thrust*, in which a humble spaceship becomes endowed with super powers of the invulnerability kind.

```
10 MEMORY 12000:BORDER
0:MODE 1
20 LOAD "!thrust1"
30 WINDOW
#,14,26,10,10:WINDOW
#2,14,26,13,13
40 tot = 0
50 FOR n = &9e00 TO &9e46
60 READ a$:a = VAL("&" + a$)
70 tot = tot + a
80 NEXT n
90 IF tot<>6235 THEN PRINT
"ERROR IN DATA.":END
100 CALL &9e00
110 DATA
2a,38,bd,22,00,9f,21,ee
120 DATA
99,22,38,bd,3e,c3,21,1a
130 DATA
9e,32,19,bd,22,1a,bd,c3
140 DATA
00,36,2a,00,9f,22,38,bd
150 DATA
cd,37,bd,3e,f7,32,30,00
160 DATA
3e,c3,21,36,6e,32,30,00
170 DATA
22,31,00,cd,00,4f,c3,00
180 DATA
3c,3e,99,32,66,71,21,3e
190 DATA 04,22,3f,43,c3,00,70
```

While we are on the subject of *Thrust*, we had a quick tiplet from **Colin Fuidge** of FIREBIRD with a finger-twisting way of cheating yourself onto the next level. Just hit (just !!) function keys 1, 2 and 3, plus the up arrow key, press the ➔ key, the DEL key, and then with your nose, ear or any other extremity press ESC. You should now be on the next level — and in the Lotus position too, more than likely . . .

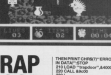


SPIKY HAROLD
(Firebird)

Now I wonder where this one came from — yet another unsung hero! Please, please put your names and addresses on the tips. This POKE should stop all Hedgehog mutilations. After typing it in, just type RUN, insert your SPIKY tape, press play and the game should load with infinite lives.

```
10 MEMORY 12000:BORDER
0:MODE 1
20 LOAD "!spiky1"
30 WINDOW
#,14,26,10,10:WINDOW
#2,14,26,13,13
40 tot =0
50 FOR n = &be00 TO &be3c
60 READ a$:a = VAL("&" = a$)
70 tot = tot + a
80 NEXT n
90 IF tot<>6360 THEN PRINT
"ERROR IN DATA.":END
100 CALL &be00
110 DATA
2a,38,bd,22,3d,be,21,ee
120 DATA
99,22,38,bd,3e,c3,21,1a
130 DATA
be,32,0e,bc,22,0f,bc,c3
140 DATA
00,83,2a,3d,be,22,38,bd
150 DATA
cd,37,bd,3e,f7,32,c1,7d
160 DATA
3e,c3,21,36,be,32,30,00
170 DATA
22,31,00,c3,00,81,af,32
180 DATA 33,9c,c3,f8,98
```





TRAP DOOR
(Piranha)

Here's the full solution followed by a POKE if that's not enough. First the POKEy bit from **Cy Booker** from Tunbridge Wells, Kent. It gives you infinite time to complete any of the tasks and is for the tape version. To use it, just type it in, type RUN and press play on the Datacorder.

```
100 REM TRAP DOOR Infinite
time
120 MEMORY &3fff
130 total = 0
140 FOR addr = &9c00 TO
&9c33
150 READ A$
160 POKE addr,VAL("&" +a$)
170 total=total+VAL("&"+a$)
180 NEXT addr
190 READ check.sum
200 If total<>check.sum
THEN PRINT CHR$(7)"ERROR
IN DATA!":STOP
210 LOAD "trapdoor",&4000
220 CALL &9c00
230 '
240 DATA
21,00,40,11,00,02,d5,c1,ed,b0,
21,50,02,11,80,9c
250 DATA
0e,19,ed,b0,3e,c9,32,50,02,32,
99,9c,cd,00,02,3e
260 DATA
21,32,50,02,cd,80,9c,af,32,c7,
0b,32,40,0c,32,33
270 DATA 0c,c3,69,02
280 DATA 4456
```

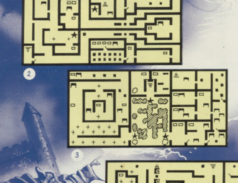
BERK'S BOOK OF POKES!

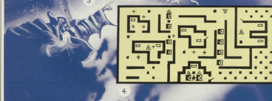


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DRUID

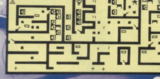
THE MAP





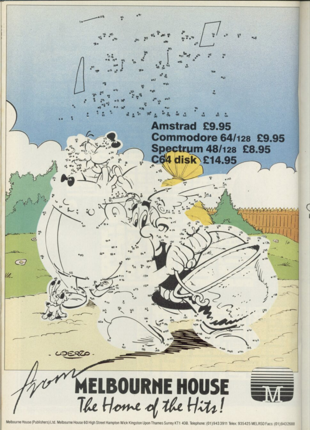
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Now for the full solution, set in by **N McCauley** of no fixed abode. The tasks may not come up in the order that they are printed here, so just go the relative section.

CAN OF WORMS

First get the can — it is the object in the centre on the ground floor where the vat is. Now go to the trapdoor, open it and capture all the worms, putting each in turn into the can. If the little yellow thing eats any of them then just open the trap door again to get some more. When you have four worms in the can, take the can to the dumb waiter and send the can to "IM UPSTAIRS"

EYE BALL CRUSH

First push the vat (large still) to the right hand side of the trap door, then push it up as far as it will go. Then go back, pick up the bottle and put it next to the still. Go back to the flower pot (basket) and pour the seeds out. Take the seeds to the courtyard with the three plant pots. Empty out the seed packet and put a seed in each pot. Go back and get the basket, then go back the plants which should now be growing. When the eyeballs have grown and fallen off the plant put them in the basket. Go to the room with stairs leading up (were the Dumb waiter lever is) and go up and left so that you are above the still. Empty the basket into the still and then go back down to the still and push it down until it is by the trap door. Place the bottle under the still's tap then open the trapdoor so that the crusher gets out. He will land in the still and make eyeball crush. Put the bottle on the dumb waiter and and send it upstairs.

FRIED EGGS

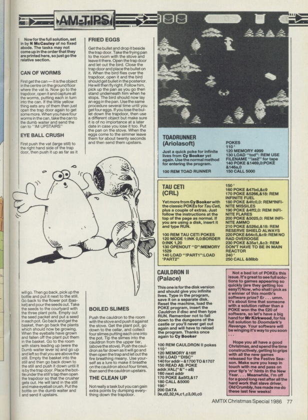
Get the bullet and drop it beside the trap door. Take the frying pan to the room with the stove and leave it there. Open the trap door and let out the bird. Close the trap door and place the bullet on it. When the bird flies over the trapdoor, open it and the bird should get bullet in the posterior. He will then fly right. Follow him, pick up the pan as you go then stand underneath him when he stops. The bird should now lay an egg in the pan. Use the same procedure several time until you get four eggs. If you lose the bullet down the trapdoor, then use a different object but make sure it is of no importance at a later date in case you lose it too. Put the pan on the stove. When the eggs come to the simmer leave them for about twenty seconds and then send them upstairs.

BOILED SLIMES

Push the cauldron to the room with the stove and push it against the stove. Get the plant pot, go down to the cellar, and collect four slimes putting each one into the pot. Tip the slimes into the cauldron from the upper tier, (above the stove). Push the cauldron as far down as it will go and then open the trap and let out the fire breathing meany. Use yourself as a lure to make it breathe on the cauldron about four times, then send the cauldron upstairs.

THE CLEAN UP

Not really a task but you can gain extra points by dumping everything down the trapdoor.



TOADRUNNER (Ariolasoft)

Just a quick poke for infinite lives from **Cy Booker** yet again. Use the normal method for entering the program.

```
100 REM TOAD RUNNER
POKES
110 '
120 MEMORY 4999
130 LOAD "tod": REM USE
FILENAME "!as2" for tape
140 POKE &1469,0:POKE
&146a,0
150 CALL 5000
```

TAU CETI (CRL)

Yet more from **Cy Booker** with the classic POKEs for *Tau Ceti*, plus a couple of extras. Just follow the instructions at the top of the page as normal. If you are using a disk, insert it and type RUN.

```
100 REM TAU CETI POKES
120 MODE 1:INK 0,0:BORDER
0:INK 1,20
130 OPENOUT "D":MEMORY
1529
140 LOAD "!PART1":LOAD
'PART2"
150 '
160 POKE &47bd,&c9
170 POKE &5266,&18: REM
INFINITE FUEL
180 POKE &4fc0,0: REM INFI-
NITE MISSILES
190 POKE &4ff2,0: REM INFI-
NITE FLARES
200 POKE &5025,0: REM INFI-
NITE AMMO
210 POKE &526d,&18: REM
RESERVE SHIELD ALWAYS
220 POKE &64c5,&c9: REM NO
RAD OVERDOSE
230 POKE &35a1,&c3: REM
DON'T HAVE TO BE IN MAIN
REACTOR
240 '
250 CALL &88bb
```

CAULDRON II (Palace)

This one is for the disk version and should give you infinite lives. Type in the program, save it on a separate disk. Reset the machine, load the POKE program, insert the *Cauldron II* disc and then type RUN. Remember not to fall down to the dungeons of the castle or you'll never get out again and will have to reload the program. Thanks once again to **Cy Booker**

```
100 REM CAULDRON II pokes
110 '
120 MEMORY &16ff
130 LOAD "DISC"
140 for addr=&1700 TO &1707
150 READ A$: POKE
addr,VAL("&"+a$)
160 next addr
170 POKE &a5f3,&17
180 CALL &5000
190 '
200 DATA
3e,d2,32,f4,c1,c3,00,c0
```

Not a bad lot of POKEs this issue. It's great to see full solutions to games appearing so quickly (are they getting too easy?) Now, who shall I pick as a winner of this month's software prize? Er . . . umm. It's about time that someone with a solution rather than a POKE won the the £20 of software, so let's have a big hand for **Mr Kirkwood**, for his full solution to *Doomdark's Revenge*. Your software will be winging it's way to you soon . . .

Hope you all have a good Christmas, and spend the time constructively, getting to grips with all the new games released for the Festive Season. Make sure you keep in touch with me and pass on your tip's 'n' hints in the New Year. . . . Meanwhile, I'm off for a good long rest after all the hard work that slave driver, Old Crumbly, has made me do these last few weeks!



LEVEL ONE
DRAGON
AIR LOCK
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
ROTOFLY
TROLL
BITERBIRD
DRAGON
LEVEL TWO
DRAGON
AIR LOCK
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
BITERBIRD
GREP
ROTOFLY
DRAGON



The EIDOLON
THE FIRST FOUR LEVELS
FIREBALLS
Direction of travel.
CRYSTALS
DRAGON BARRIER
START
LEVEL FOUR
DRAGON
DRAGON
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
BOTTLENECK
TROLL
ROTOFLY
DRAGON
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
MALLOC
PUFFER BIRD
BITER BIRD
DRAGON

GO BMXing WITH ELITE

WIN A BMX BIKE

30 copies of SPACE HARRIER for runners up

The ever-so-impressive Mr Wilcox (who's a very big cheese at **Elite**) is overjoyed at the moment with the success of his company's games and is looking forward to Christmas when one of **Elite**'s latest and greatest games, *Space Harrier*, will be on the shelves of a shop near you.

As the game will be arriving just in time for the festivities, Uncle Steve has donned his red coat, false whiskers and Dunlop wellies. He may look rather silly as he climbs into his Lotus Esprit, but he'll appear very seasonal . . . 'cos he's offering two BMX bikes as top prizes in this Yuletide competition.

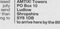
Being the season of goodwill to man..er..personkind, Uncle Steve does realise that lots of people can't fit onto one BMX bike (or even in one Lotus Esprit for that matter!) so thirty runners up will all be able to thrill to the speed and daring of driving around a TV screen, blowing up the aliens and saving the entire population of the universe.

Funny old world you find yourself in, playing *Space Harrier*. I mean, you go to all the trouble of hiring a ship and filling it full of go-juice, all paid for out of your own pocket and no-one really seems to mind the fact that you may be blown into your constituent atoms and then there'll be no-one left to feed your cat. Ah well, such is life . . .

I'm sorry, I'm feeling a little unloved at the moment. It's all the people here at the Towers you see. I know they're really nice people (sometimes) but they're always so busy and never seem to have any time to do the nice little things that tell me I'm really appreciated. I'm actually quite afraid that they'll forget to send me a Christmas card this year and when my Auntie Mabel comes around on Boxing day and asks me embarrassing questions like, "Have you got a girlfriend yet?" and "Where are all your CHristmas cards?" I'll have to lie like I did last year and pretend that I had a whole mailsack at work but left them in the broom cupboard.

So what you must do for this competition is to create your very own Christmas card for me and the rest of the AMTIX! minions. You can use pens, crayons, paints or felts for the outside and on the inside of the card you must put a Chrismassy-like verse for the whole AMTIX! team.

Best card and verse will receive the BMX bike as a 'just missed Christmas' present from jolly Steve at **Elite** but he'll try to send it round to your house rather than fill his wellies full of soot trying to get it down your chimney.


Send your entries to:
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
AMTIX! Towers
PO Box 10
Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 1DB
to arrive here by the 8th January.

TEN PERSONAL STEREOS TO WIN!!

20 copies of the HIT PACK games for the runners up



New out from **Elite** is the wonderful Hit Pack, a blend of four of the finest computer games all brought together on one cassette. It's got *Airwolf*, *Commando*, *Bomb Jack* plus *Frank Bruno's Boxing* and to celebrate such a prestigious release **Elite** have decided to run a comp with us. Up for grabs are ten first prizes of Personal stereos each with a Hit Pack and twenty runner up prizes of Hitpacks. Good eh?

But you're going to have to work for your prize and since these are such *nice* prizes you are in fact going to have to help us. At the mo there's a bit of problem at the Towers and it's name is Sumpter, more commonly known as El Retardo the comps sub minion. The poor boy has got a bit upset recently over the continual teasing and baiting he's had to put up with over his dress (non)sense. Sumpter doesn't dress subtley, bright pinky flairy trousers, coats that look like Sellafield surplus anti rad jackets, socks that never match except in their odour. These are Sumpter qualities and such a ribbing he's taken from those Towers lads that he's crawled into the cupboard for a good sulk.

Well what we need is something to coaxe him out of his catatonic like state and this is where you come in. What we want you to do is to make an audio tape up that will get him out of the cupboard. You can use any tactic you want, tempt him with lots of lovely promises, threaten him with the most loathsome fate you can imagine, or just offer to buy him a pint of old flatulence bitter. Anything you want, just keep your entries under 3 minutes long.

So all you've got to do is get El Retardo out of the cupboard and you could find yourself jiving down the high street with personal stereo with brill new Hit Pack. Just send your cassettes to:

GET SUMPTER OUT,
AMTIX! Towers,
PO BOX 10, LUDLOW,
Shropshire SY8 1DB

Entries must be in by January 8.

AMTECH

ANTHONY CLARKE

Amtech is back again!. What do you think of last month's new look? We think it's a definite improvement and one we hope to keep up for eternity.



It seems that we have been taken over by **Siren Software** this month as we review the full range of software and hardware to come from them in the last few weeks. Our tech teacher and education expert, David Paul, takes a look at *Dr Logo* for the very young and creates a special *Logo* proceedure called "AMTIX". It seems that quite a few of you are starting to leave us Prestel messages. Some of them are not too nice, but we thrive on criticism so keep those letters coming. If you haven't got a modem yourself then try asking at your local computer club, someone is bound to have one. Our MBX number is 105845851.

Making a guest appearance in AMTIX! **Simon Goodwin** gives us the info on some of the best compilers in the PCW marketplace.

The Screwdriver Awards system. AMTECH now has screwdrivers to give away — not to readers but to products reviewed. New and innovative hardware or software that either breaks new ground or improves on an existing concept is particularly likely to collect a screwdriver . . . but if we just like something a lot, we'll hand out an award.

None of your cheapo lead-alloy screwdrivers here — AMTECH only awards the best: gold, silver and bronze.

The Golden Screwdriver is given to a product that we reckon is the best thing ever produced in its field. Three screwdrivers appear with the review . . .

The Silver Screwdriver turns up in the guise of a pair of screwdrivers and indicates that the product is very good, but perhaps not terribly innovative . . .

The Bronze Screwdriver is awarded for competence in an existing field. A neat implementation of a well established idea earns a single screwdriver.

Intelligence in the office

While changing the EPROM in Dicky's head I wondered if there would ever be a time when I might get something remotely like intelligence from him (rather than the normal drivel he spurts out about tech matters). Once again my luck was in, as that very same morning **SIGMA** sent me their latest piece of bookwork entitled *AMSTRADS and Artificial Intelligence*.

The book contains programs and discussions on all those aspects of Artificial Intelligence that are of most use to the home user. These included how a computer can be used to write prose and verse, though some of the examples used in the book yielded very strange results.

Natural language translation is covered fairly well with a program that converts a subset of German into English. Classic projects on natural language translation are discussed, with the best being on the Russian/English converter which translated the phrase "Out of sight, out of mind" into "Invisible idiot". The classic "mouse and maze" program is also listed, this enables the computer to find its way out of any maze that you construct.

One of the most useful subjects described in the book is character recognition. This one gets around the problems faced by computer controlled robots that must know what they are looking at, even if the object or design is displaced or rotated by any degree.

To me one of the most interesting subjects covered in the book is that of computer reasoning of the form:-

Fish are nutritious

Food is nutritious

which are facts supplied by you to the computer. If you were now to ask:-

Is fish a food?

the program would return the answer "YES". If on the other hand it had no information on the words food or fish, then it would answer "I don't know."

There is one section for those of you who wish to use a form of Artificial Intelligence in games, Chess, wargames, etc, and uses the games of **O** and **X's** and **HEX** (otherwise known as "Blockbusters"), to illustrate its use.

For those who want to use Artificial Intelligence in any form, then this book is a good grounding and should lead you gently into the subject before you embark on to larger things. Each program is very well explained with each module having a section to itself. If you are into the whole subject of Artificial Intelligence then £8.95 is a small price to pay for a fascinating insight into the subject.

```
ODE TO SARAH

MY SARAH, SARAH, SARAH,
SO STRANGELY SLY,
NO WONDER SINCE YOU'VE GOT
A VERY ICY EYE.
OH SARAH YOUR VERY
LOVELY HAIR,
IS RATHER LIKE A
PLIGHT THAT'S FAIR.
MY SARAH, SARAH, SARAH,
SO STRANGELY HIGH,
NO WONDER SINCE YOU'VE GOT
A VERY TRAGIC REPLY.
THE MAGICAL SPELL COULD NEVER
BE SO DEAR,
AS SARAH IN THE MORNING
WHEN YOU DISAPPEAR.
```

Improbable prose, created by the ODE program.

```
< BARD >

TERRIFYINGLY BEHIND THE FOREST
THE CREEPY SKELETON KILLS. THE
SKULL KILLS A DEMON. A SKULL
HAUNTS THE SKELETON. A WEREWOLF
FRIGHTENS THE FOREST. A GHOST
DEVOURS A CORPSE. A CREEPY VAMPIRE
ATTACKS THROUGH A DEMON. THE
GHOSTLY SKULL BLEEDS THE CREEPY
SKULL. THE FIENDISHLY
TRANSYLVANIAN FOG TERRIFIES A
GROTESQUE FOREST. A CREEPY SKULL
DECAPITATES THROUGH THE DEMON. THE
DEMON BITES ALTHOUGH A SKELETON
HAUNTS.
```

Haunting words as the BARD relays a frightening tale.

COMPILERS GO PRO

In the beginning, there was Fortran. Pascal arrived a while later. Now our tame compiler-writer, SIMON GOODWIN, examines two packages that bring 'grown up' languages to the PCW range.

Way back in the golden age of CP/M, London's **Prospero Software** wrote a *Pascal* compiler. *Pascal* is a trendy programming language named after a French genius and invented by a Swiss professor, Niklaus Wirth, in 1970. The language was designed for teaching; *Pascal* forces the programmer to be disciplined and systematic, so that programs are easy to read, understand, and compile.

Pro Pascal was written in *Pascal*; it compiled itself. The International Standards Organisation tested it and pronounced it 'Class A' — it passed all the tests and should produce bug-free Amstrad code from any program written with another validated compiler. The ISO tests are tough, and very few micro compilers pass them all, so *Pro Pascal* instantly became a hot property.

AND THEN THERE WAS FORTRAN

Pro Pascal was used to write *Pro Fortran* — a compiler for the first 'real' computer language. *Fortran* (short for FORmula TRANslator) was invented in the mid 1950's and standardised 20 years ago. *Fortran* is old-fashioned and rather anarchic in style, but it is still a popular language for scientific and engineering work, especially on large computers.

Pro Fortran conforms to the 1966 American Standard, known as *Fortran 66* or (with a few embellishments) *Fortran 4*. Few people write new software in *Fortran* these days, but those that do tend to use *Fortran 77*, an improved version of the language which *Prospero*'s compiler cannot handle. *Pro Fortran* seems intended to compile older 'off-the-shelf' applications; *Pascal* or *C* would be better languages for new projects.

PORTABILITY

Prospero also produces versions of *Pro Pascal* and *Pro Fortran* for the IBM PC and similar computers, so you can move programs compiled on the Amstrad to the PC or its clones quite painlessly. The original price of each compiler was £300, but Amstrad CP/M versions are available from **Software Toolshop** for £85.

PACKAGING

In exchange for seventeen Dukes you get a cardboard box containing an A5 ring-bound manual, one three inch disk (with files on both sides) and a couple of bits of foam to stop things rattling about.

The manuals are well-written and clearly reproduced from a daisywheel print-out. Divider cards split the manuals into four sections. The *Fortran* guide starts with a concise summary of the language, whereas the *Pascal* manual begins with a brisk tutorial for those familiar with other programming languages. Part two consists of a comprehensive, indexed reference guide to the relevant language. The third section contains real 'instructions' on using the package. Appendices summarise the 'grammar' of the language and explain the meaning of the error-messages.



THE LICENCE

You are deemed to agree to a set of licensing terms, on a separate card, if you break a seal on the disk. In short, you promise not to copy the compiler for other people, or modify it. In return *Prospero* will provide technical support and notice of upgrades.

The card also explains that *Prospero* 'makes no representation whatsoever that the software will be suitable for any specific purpose' — even if the person selling it made such a promise — and 'accepts no responsibility for any mathematical or technical limitations of the software'.

Whatever *Prospero* may say, you're entitled to a refund under the Sale of Goods Act if you break the seal and discover that the product is not of 'merchantable quality' — say, the disk won't work. The draconian license terms, common in software publishing, are probably meant to dissuade large scale lawsuits and copyright theft. If in doubt, play *Prospero* at their own game, and see a lawyer!

THE FORTRAN

Fortran is an early language, and a simple one — like a naive attempt at a *Basic* compiler, with primitive but potentially powerful data handling facilities reminiscent of machine-code — equivalencing and common blocks. Programs are made up of fixed-format, columnar files; the first file specified can merge others by name from disk.

Fortran is often used for mathematical applications; its simplicity and fast parameter passing (always by reference) makes it an efficient language for scientific programming. *Pro Fortran* allows arithmetic with 8, 16 and 32 bit signed integers (unusual in micro compilers). There are no unsigned integers — a pity.

Pro Fortran can also handle 7 and 16 digit floating point numbers (in the IEEE standard format), and 7 digit complex numbers. Arrays can hve up to three dimensions.

In *Fortran*, string handling is practically non-existent — you can read and write sequences of characters in memory, but all manipulations have to be performed character by character. No good for Adventure games!

File handling is powerful; you can use fixed or random-length formatted or unformatted, with random access to fixed-length records. Disk errors can be trapped, and fields are helpfully padded with spaces when read from the keyboard. Useful commands let you read and write bytes to memory or to the Z80 ports.

THE PASCAL

The core of *Pro Pascal* is a standard *Pascal* compiler, with all the control and data-structuring facilities you might expect. Programs are read from standard ASCII text files. There's no limit on the length of identifiers, but lines can be no more than 255 characters long.

You can build up a large program from several small files, using the INCLUDE facility. One input file can request the inclusion of others, so you can build different versions of a program by using a different initial list.

Vulcan readers will be pleased to hear that INCLUDE can be nested (included within itself) four times over.

Datatypes exceed even the usual generous *Pascal* variety. You can use 8, 16, or powerful 32 bit signed integers, 7 or 16 digit floating-point numbers, sets with up to 4039 elements, random-access files, variant records, pointers, booleans, subranges and enumerated types with up to 256 elements. There are also strings, which I'll discuss in a moment.

If you want portable code you can tell the compiler to reject everything that is not part of the ISO standard. Otherwise — if you're going to stick with *Pro Pascal* — you can use a stack of powerful and neatly-designed extensions which are not part of the formal language.

BELLS AND WHISTLES

In standard *Pascal* text must be held in fixed-sized arrays of characters, padded with spaces. *Pro Pascal* allows Basic-like 'dynamic' strings where the length can vary. The maximum length must be set when the variable is declared, so that the compiler can allocate space for the variable. Strings of up to 255 characters are allowed, as in Basic. New com-



mands will search one string for another, append, insert or delete characters, and extract 'slices'.

Other 'bonus' facilities let you read and write to the CP/M command line, Z80 ports or individual bytes of memory. Functions let you find the address where any variable is stored, and the amount of space used; you can also check on the amount of spare memory available as a program runs.

Random access files are allowed. Files can be RENAMEd, APPENDed or ERASEd from within a program; you can also search the directory of a disk to check the validity of file names typed in by the user.

Miscellaneous facilities include a function to check how much memory is free, a random-number generator, a procedure to check for a keypress, and a MOVE command which assigns data without performing *Pascal*'s usual datatype checking.

Best of all, there's full error trapping from within a program. You call the built-in procedure OWN-ERR with your own error-trapping procedure as a parameter. If an error subsequently occurs, your procedure is called and passed full details of the error. If you have allowed for that error in your code, corrective action can be taken and the program may continue with a GOTO. Otherwise the normal error message appears.

All these extra facilities cure the main flaw of *Pascal* — its lack of 'low level' features. These are little needed in education, but they're vital for systems programming. Today *C* is the standard language for this, but extended *Pro Pascal* is probably a better tool for the job.

COMMON GROUND? CHIPPIES??

Many parts of the *Prospero* packages are common to *Pro Fortran* and *Pro Pascal*. This may appeal to people who want to write software in a mixture of *Pascal* and *Fortran*, or who just want to use both languages with the minimum of fuss. Each package came with a set of simple demonstration programs, and three utilities; a linker, a library manager and an installation program.

Routines can be compiled one by one and then merged into a single program by a utility called a 'linker'. The linker extracts system routines from a library, so you don't have to write you own code for standard jobs like reading the keyboard and file-handling.

Similarly the linker can combine *Fortran* and *Pascal* routines into one program. You can even tell the linker to produce programs that will run in ROM, with separate code and data areas. There is no apparent support for PCW graphics, although the required machine-code routines could be built into the library if written with **Microsoft**'s *Macro-80* assembler.

The 'library manager' lets you combine groups of routines into one file, or break such files up into their component parts. This is useful if you're working on a large project.

INSTALLATION

Both compilers come with a configuration utility which lets you change the options and drives used to hold system and temporary files. I used this to get the entire system to run from drive M: on a 512k home-expanded computer. Alternatively, I could have moved the system onto a larger 'real' drive, or adjusted the compiler options to trade speed and brevity for improved diagnostic information and error-checking.

The code generated by the compilers seemed quite efficient, although not as good (understandably) as some non-standard compilers. The total size of program and data must not exceed 64k, which could be a problem if you're converting software from another machine. Other CP/M compilers impose the same restriction — at least *Pro Pascal* and *Fortran* programs are allowed to load one another, passing up to 80 bytes of 'parameter' information — perhaps the name of temporary files holding further data. In fact this is how the *Prospero* compilers work.

The compilers worked slowly, even when run from drive M. It took them both about three quarters of a minute to compile and link a half-page program. Top speed, on larger files, seemed only about 100-200 lines per minute. Unless you're a very systematic, well-organised programmer, you'll find this indolence irritating, even though you don't have to link routines till you're ready to try them out.

VERDICT

Pro Pascal and *Pro Fortran* are well-made, professional programming tools. The only disappointments are the limitation to 64k memory — silly on the PCW machines — the lack of graphics, and the slow rate of compilation.

Pro Fortran has no rival, whereas there are a number of cheaper alternatives to *Pro Pascal* on the Amstrad. **Hisoft**'s compiler is cheaper and produces very fast, compact code, but it is not ISO standard and lacks the linder and extensions of *Pro Pascal*. **Digital Research**'s *Pascal MT* is unfriendly and reputedly bug-ridden. *Turbo Pascal* compiles very quickly, but it produces verbose code. The Turbo dialect of *Pascal* is powerful but non-standard.

In my view *Pro Pascal* is the best choice for systems programmers and those developing complex software for a range of computers.



QUEUEING FOR THE POST

QMAIL, as the name suggests, is a new mail-merge program from **Proteus**. For those of you who do not know what mail-merge means I shall try to explain. It is a way of sending a form letter to many people with a program changing the name, address, and other pertinent points as it goes along.

QMAIL is compatible with the normal *Locoscript* package that comes with the PCW8256/512, and so letters may be created, as documents, and *QMAIL* will produce the data-base from which the names or addresses are read. The data base can be formed by anything from just formal names and addresses with their appropriate salutations, to full details about a person.

Once the data-base has been set up then *QMAIL* can be used to print out the already created letter with the data that is needed. Instead of all the data on a correct record being used in the text, it is possible to be selective over what data you have in the text by the use of attributes. An attribute, in this case, is an identification code which you can add to the end of a record. The program can then be instructed to use only those records with the appropriate attribute(s).

The example given in the text is of an electrical retailer who has all his customers names and addresses on a data-base. The attributes can be used to show what each customer has purchased, for instance a radio could have the attribute **R**, **S** for stereo **D** for dishwasher and so on. Then if you only what to send a letter to everyone who has bought a radio you could simply tell the program to extract only the records that contain the **R** attribute. Each record can have several attributes and so a search could be made for all those records relating to people who may have bought a radio and a dishwasher.

ILLOGICAL CAPTAIN

I found no way of using the logical operators AND, OR or NOT, so that you could set the data-base to only print out letters to people who, for instance, may have bought a radio and a stereo but not a dishwasher. This would mean that someone who had bought all three would not have a letter.

The data-base part of the program allows you to edit merge and create files quite easily, each section having a skill level associated with it. There are three skill levels in all. An **N** next to the heading means that this particular part of the *QMAIL* package could be used by anyone who has been learning about *QMAIL*, an **L** signifies that the user should have a working knowledge of *Locoscript* before attempting to use the function described, and finally an **O** means that you also need a working knowledge of CP/M. Although these descriptions of how much background knowledge you need to start using the package correctly are correct, the actual amount of reading up beforehand is minimal as you only need to know about those functions that you intend to use.

One of the most useful things about *QMAIL* is that you are not just stuck to producing form letters. There is also the facility to produce labels. This system is similar to the way we produce labels for subscribers. Most label programs allow you to define the size of a label, the number of labels across the paper, the distance between each label and so on. Instead you must define all of this inside a document, created by *Locoscript*. This means, in effect, that you are using a full screen editor instead of just pumping numbers into the program, making *QMAIL* much easier to use.

PACKING HEAT

The *QMAIL* package comes in the now usual business like, black ring binder which contains both the disk and manual. The manual itself runs to 35 pages which, as well as the instructions, also includes a full, though somewhat sparse, tutorial. Overall *QMAIL* is a very competent piece of software that should cover the need of most small businesses. The inclusion of a data-base, although limited, is quite a nice idea and can be used by itself for several jobs. The use of menus and movement with the arrow keys does get rid of problems with other mail-merge programs that use a sort of command language and so alleviates the user from learning the system as just a look at the manual explains everything. *QMAIL* represents a worth investment to any small business at only £29.95.

In a spin

The problem with most printers is that they use A4 size sheets which are much too narrow to print out data-tables, spread sheet totals and the like. Even if you can get hold of a piece of software that can print text sideways down the paper then you are still in trouble because the width of the paper will usually only allow up to 56 lines "down" it once it has been rotated. *Rotate* from **Proteus** has got around both problems by not only allowing sideways printing but also enabling you to print up to 96 characters "down" (across) the paper.

Rotate is designed to be nothing more than this as it does not allow you to create or edit files, simply to print them. The program will print out any standard ASCII file created by programs such as *Wordstar*, *Locoscript*, *Tasword*, and some of the less known programs such as *Daybook*, *Nominal Ledger*, and *Scratchpad Plus*. *Rotate* will allow you to use a variety of line spacings, character widths, character spacings and fonts, both continuous and single sheet paper, and also allow you to print in the normal fashion as well as sideways. So the program could be well employed just printing out letters or forms in different fonts.

Rotate comes on a single 3 inch disk which should be immediately backed-up onto another disk so that the original will not become damaged or possible overwritten by a text file. The program is menu driven, giving you simple choices which will lead you into separate sub menus so that all options can be specified before printing. The basic list of options will ask you if you wish to print across the page or rotate down the page, using single or double height characters, one of the four fonts, set the number of lines down the page (which is affected by the font used), the line/character spacing, and of course, if you are using single or continuous stationary. It is also possible from the main menu to go back to CP/M, which means that you do not have to reset the machine to get back to another system that you may also be using such as Wordstar.

If you are happy with the settings as they are on booting the program then just hitting **4** on the main menu will put you into the secondary print options which will ask for the name of the file that you wish to print and which drive it is on. There it no function available for you to print out a number of files one after the other in a tied together form, known as group files. This can be a problem with some programs that save data as a series of several files, but it is of course possible to get around this by attaching the files together with PIP before printing.

Changing fonts will give you four options, the first is the standard *Rotate* font which is the most compact and allows you to have up to 96 characters "down" (across) the paper, all the other fonts are at least double the height of this font and will only allow 56 character rows.

Changing the line spacing allows you to choose the size of gap betweer. one line and the next, a value of one will give a space the size of one character, which is relative to the size of the font currently in use. That means if the current font is double height then the line spacing will be of the same size as the printed text and be double the normal without changing the size of the gap.

Character spacing works in much the same way as line spacing but determines the distance between each letter. Unlike line spacing it is not dependent upon the character style or size.

Rotate does exactly what it is meant to do although I think people who need this sort of operation on a regular basis will buy a much larger 13 inch printer and reduce time and money in the long run. For those with just a little do it should be very useful, even if it does weigh in at a rather hefty £24.95.

Watch your back Luke, ARNOR have 3D power

Ever wanted to produce those stunning 3D effects in *Elite* or *Starion*. With *Model Universe* from **Armor** you can do it, to some degree. The program comes as a graphic designer and demo program together with, on the flip side, that hardy old game known as *Gatechrasher* which was released as a full price game some time ago by **Amsoft**.

Model Universe can only be described as an introduction to the ideas of 3D modelling as the routines are only accessible from the main program, totally negating their claim that it could be of use to the serious user. Even if it was possible to use the program from BASIC or machine code their would be very little point in using it as the whole thing is much too slow. Then again if you just want to use it for a bit of fun then I can foresee people being engrossed for hours.

The main program allows you to create, rotate, scale and transform any wireframe design that you care to produce in full 3D. An object in the wrong place. The position option will allow you to move it in along any axis to the required place.

Objects can be expanded or reduced by any amount as long as none of the co-ordinates grow bigger than plus or minus 250.

The circle option should have been more truthfully called the polygon option as you may create a shape with any number of sides from 3 to 30. If drawing the polygon would result in more than 255 lines or vertices then the program would not draw it and report with an error message.

If an object such as a cube needs to be drawn then it is possible to do this by creating only one side and letting the extend option do the rest. All lines already drawn would be extended along the Z axis as far as you specify and corners may or may not be connected depending on your answer to this question.

The only problem with the extend option is that it will extend all the lines currently on the screen, which at times will not be desirable. To get around this there is the **EXT FLAG** option which will only extend the lines drawn after it is evoked. When selected you are given a further menu with three options. The first **RESET** will extend the whole object but not join the edges. The **UPDATE** option will only extend those lines and vertices that are created from now on and the last option **SAME** will allow you to get out of the option without changing the options. Any of the functions can be cancelled before another function takes place by using the **CRTL-C** keys. This method of erasing errors is only one ply so you must remember to remove any mistake before going onto the next option or drawing the next line.

An inside view of a jittering Joystick.

Shocks for Luke Skywalker as a Tie Fighter moves in for the kill.

unfortunate problem with the program is that there is no hidden line removal option, making some of the more complicated designs somewhat confusing when rotated. The design menu allows you to place lines on the screen in two dimensions and also be able to create lines that go both in and out of the screen, ie the Z axis, but these still show up as lines on the X, Y axis that makes up your screen. To get around the problems of orientation when creating 3D objects you can change the viewpoint to the left, right, top, or bottom sides. Sometimes you may find that you have designed the

If you go into the display mode then you can rotate the object in any way you please. The default setting for rotation is with the viewpoint set at x=0, y=0, z=-336, which puts the object somewhere in front of you. This viewpoint can be changed to any X, Y, and Z value. There are three possible ways of rotating the object depending on the current origin state. A static origin is one that does not change position and is fixed so that rotation takes place about the viewpoint. With a dynamic origin the rotation takes place around the origin and so your design can be seen to rotate in front of you rather than around you. If you were to translate the object from its current position to another you may find that the object still swings in and out of view although it is still rotating about the origin.

Pressing V puts you back to the viewpoint origin which is the fastest method whereby the object rotates about the viewpoint. From the display menu you can print out the screen to any of a number of Epson compatible printers such as the DMP 2000/3000. A screen can also be saved to tape or disk for future loading into your own program. The **BASIC** option will save all the points in an X and Y form onto tape or disk. Using the file you can use a plotter to get an image of what was on screen at the time.

The Parameters option will allow you to change both the angle or rotation to any one of nine values from one to ninety degrees.

The distance that the object can be translated, where the object is moved without it being rotated, can be any value from 1 to 50.

Overall *Model Universe* is something of a let down. the inability to use the routines from your own program is a definite bad patch and the way that you can only use one colour in any design also gives the impression that very little thought went into the program.



Logo for the very young.

DAVID PAUL creates "AMTIX", a special Logo procedure for children

One of the appeals of **Logo** to those involved in education is that the turtle graphics aspect of **Logo** can be introduced to very young children to help them understand spacial relationships and at the same time help them become familiar with the world of the microcomputer.

A problem is that the traditional Qwerty keyboard often forms a barrier to young children, the time spent searching for the right keys makes programming a tedious business for toddlers, hit the wrong key a few times and parents start to lose patience whilst finding the correct key and pressing it triumphantly doesn't always work either — as over enthusiastic key pressing results in a long line of letters when the key auto repeats. Interesting things happen too when the child keeps a finger on the delete key — like dad pulling out the plug or the culprit being sent to bed early.

To help solve the keyboard barrier, which can also be a problem to those who are physically handicapped, specially designed and simplified computer keyboards have been developed and these are often used in schools working with **Logo**. By using these special keyboards children of infant school age and younger can use **Logo** commands to control both the motors of the floor turtle and the on-screen turtle sprite.

But you do not need to go to the expense of buying a special keyboard if you would like to help youngsters work with Logo. You can simply use **Logo** to create an "Easy Logo" version which will accept one-key commands, and no great programming skill is necessary either.

It will help if you have some idea of **Logo** to begin with. "Child's Play" (AMTIX!, June 1986) outlines some of the ideas behind **Logo** and "Meet the Turtle" (AMTIX!, October 1986) lists and explains some of the more important Turtle graphic commands and editing procedures. If you are really desperate, you can try the *Dr Logo* section of your Amstrad manual, but this is too brief to be really helpful.

The short procedure makes use of two **Logo** primitives (commands) MAKE and RC (Readchar).

The MAKE command allows the user to assign a value to a word or list, it must be followed by two imputs, the first being the name preceded by a set of quotes, of the variable, and the second the value which you decide to give it.

First, of course, as Amstrad *Dr Logo* runs with CP/M you must load your version of CP/M and **Logo** — CP/M 2.2 and *Logo 2* for the CPC 664 and for those who have added a disk drive to their CPC 464; CP/M Plus and *Logo 3* for the CPC 6128 and PCW range. Using the MAKE command:-

From the opening **Logo** screen type TS (TextScreen) followed by RETURN to give you a full text screen for writing on, then type the following:-

MAKE "NAME Fred

This assigns the value Fred to the variable NAME, now typing in:-

PR :NAME

Should result in the word Fred appearing on the screen.

The : tells *Dr Logo* to look for the value assigned to the variable.

The **Logo** operation RC (Readchar) will read a single character from the keyboard when a key is pressed and pass it on as its output — it does not print it out on screen.

Now all we have to do is to use MAKE and RC together to write a procedure in which the value of the variables can be used by a single key press to create a "one-key Logo".

If you are using *Logo 3* with CP/M Plus you can type ERALL to erase all procedures and variables from your Logo workspace, this primitive is not available with *Dr Logo* running on 64 K machines — but our test MAKE will not have used much memory!

Our one-key **Logo** version is called **AMTIX**, the command WRAP has been included to keep the turtle on screen - stops youngsters trying to peer into the back of your monitor too. Start off by typing TS for a full text screen then type in the procedure:-

```
to amtix
wrap
make :z rc
        if :z ½ "f  fd 10
        if :z ½ b  bk 10
        if :z ½ r  rt 30
        if :z ½ l  lt 30
        if :z ½ p  pu
        if :z ½ d  pd
        if :z ½ h  ht
        if :z ½ s  st
        if :z ½ c  cs
        if :z ½ e  pe
amtix
end
```

The message "**AMTIX DEFINED**" should appear on screen, now call up the procedure by typing amtix and the following key presses will operate:-

f the turtle will move ten steps forward drawing a line on screen.

b the turtle will move ten steps back drawing a line on screen.

r the turtle turns 30 degrees right without changing position.

l the turtle turns 30 degrees left without changing position.

p the turtle will lift its pen up - no draw mode.

d the turtle will lower its pen - drawing mode.

h the turtle will hide and disappear from view.

s the turtle will show itself on screen.

c clears the screen.

e pen erase - the turtle will erase any lines it travels along.

Amtix one key commands have deliberately been kept as close as possible to full **Logo** commands:- f for fd, p for pd, etc. so that Amtix can be used as an introduction to **Logo** before a child starts school.

If this is not an important consideration it is possible to make single key — pressures create shapes to help with shape recognition and to design simple games and problem solving exercises.

To create a square, include the line:-

```
if :z ½ q   repeat 4   fd 50 rt 90
```

To create a triangle, include the line:-

```
if :z ½ t   repeat 3   fd 50 rt 120
```

By using "**Amtix Logo**" toddlers can produce pictures and designs on screen and enter the fascinating microworld, but be warned, you might have to fight to get your micro back!



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Gimme a 'd' Gimme a 'i' Gimme a 's' Gimme a 'k' Gimme a 's'. Put them together and what have you got? Lots of 3 inch disks all over of the place. All in a messy heap. No use at all.

Once more we've come to the rescue with a fabulous Disk box — pictured here! The box can hold 10 disks in all — but here's the clever bit. The disks can either be displayed raised, so it is possible to see all of the disk labels without having to hunt about inside. However, when you want to pack up and take all your disks on holiday with you, a switch at the front allows them to be dropped level so the cover can be closed.

The *Micro Interface Disk Box* can be obtained direct from AMTIX! mail order at the handy price of £5.00, including post and packing, as opposed to the normal **£5.95** Just fill in the form below and make your cheques and postal orders payable to Newsfield Limited.

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....

.... **Postcode** ....

Please send me .... disk box(es). I enclose a cheque/postal order for £.......... (£5 per box).

Send your order forms to: **DISK BOX OFFER, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB.**

PLEASE DEBIT MY VISA/ACCESS ACCOUNT
I wish to pay by Visa/Access (delete as applicable)

Signature

Expiry Date

Please Charge My Account No:

Name

Card Holder's Address

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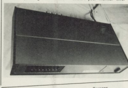
MODULATING WITH MODULATORS

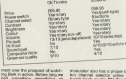
Well there we were, bored out of tiny little minds and wholly fed up because we couldn't watch Trap Door on the telly. Oh how I wish we could pick up ITV on our humble Amstrad monitors. Then with a sudden movement and woosh of spray, (well it was raining), no less than two parcels appeared upon my desk. If I can't watch Trap Door then I will just have to do some work.

So in a few moments I had opened the packages and found to my surprise a couple of handy modulators, both cut out to turn your straddles into a cheap, but very good quality, television. But we haven't got an aerial, cried Richard, quivering with excitement over the prospect of watching Berk in action. Before long we had something resembling an aerial made from old coat hangers, a few shelf supports and the secret ingredient, yes you guessed it, some of Saffron's 18lb knicker elastic, guaranteed to kill at ten paces.

The two pieces of ''lifesaving'' gadgetry were the **Dk' Tronics** *TV Receiver* and the **Screens** *Screenvision*, both of which will turn your Amstrad colour of Green monitor into a television. Both of them gave very clear pictures, in fact the picture is of the same standard as any colour portable TV. The **Dk'tronics** version had only four controls, On-off coupled with the volume control, a brightness control, colour control; and finally a tuning knob. The reason for the omission of the contrast is that on green monitors one is provided, and with the colour monitor the brightness on the side of the case acts more like a contrast control.

The whole unit fits underneath the monitor very tidily and does not strain the monitor lead as the connector is at the front of the unit. The **Screens**, modulator on the other hand, has all its controls at the back as well as the input which means that you must either have the unit in front of the machine or stretch your monitor wire. The modulator also has a proper button channel selector unlike the tuning knob on the **Dk' Tronics**.

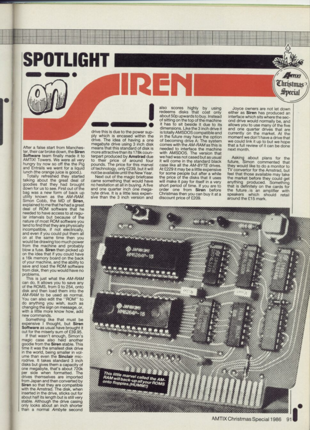




	Dk'Tronics	Screens
Price.	£69.95	£69.95
Power switch	Yes rotary	Yes (push type)
Channel select	Rotary type	8 buttons
Contrast	No rotary	Yes rotary
Brightness	Yes rotary	Yes rotary
Colour	Yes rotary	Yes rotary
Volume	Yes rotary (on-off)	Yes rotary
Pic qual	10/10 (area dependent)	10/10 (area dep)
Hi-fi out	No	Yes
Sound qual	7/10	6/10 (9/10 with hi-fi)
Composite Vid in	No	Yes
Green scr quality	9/10	4/10

Overall, neither is a clear winner as both have flaws, with the **Screens** modulator it is the poor quality of the green screen picture and the way the connector and controls are all at the back of the machine. With the **Dk'tronics** it's the use of a rotary tuner instead of the more normal push button which in today's market work out at just about the same price as the rotary tuner. Both, on the other hand, give very clean colour pictures that everyone should be happy with.

SPOTLIGHT on SIREN



After a false start from Manchester, their car broke down, the **Siren Software** team finally made it to AMTIX! Towers. We were all very hungry by now so off the the Pig and Entrails we went for a liquid lunch (the orange juice is good.).

Totally refreshed they started talking about the great deal of goodies that they had brought down for us to see. First out of the bag was a new form of back up utility known as the *AM-RAM*. Simon Cobb, the MD of **Siren**, explained to me that he had a great deal of ROM software that he needed to have access to at regular intervals but because of the nature of most ROM software you tend to find that they are physically incompatible, if not electrically, and even if you could put them all on at the same time then you would be drawing too much power from the machine and probably blow a fuse. **Siren** then picked up on the idea that if you could have a 16k memory board on the back of your machine, and the ability to save and load the ROM software from disk, then you would have no problems.

This is just what the *AM-RAM* can do. It allows you to save any of the ROMS, from 0 to 254, onto disk and then load them into the *AM-RAM* to be used as normal. You can also edit the ''ROM'' to do anything you wish, such as changing the sign on message, or, with a little more know how, add new commands.

Something like that must be expensive I thought, but **Siren Software** as usual have brought it out for the miserly sum of £39.95.

If that wasn't enough, Simon's magic case also held another goodie from the **Siren** stable. This time it was the smallest disk drive in the world, being smaller in volume than even the **Sinclair** microdrive. It takes standard 3 inch disks but gives them a capacity of one megabyte, that's about 720k per side when formatted. The drives themselves are imported from Japan and then converted by **Siren** so that they are compatible with the Amstrad. The disk, when inserted in the drive, sticks out for about half its length but is still very stable. Although the drive casing only looks about an inch shorter than a normal *Ambyte* second drive this is due to the power supply which is encased within the drive. The idea of having a one megabyte drive using 3 inch disk means that this standard of disk is more attractive than its 178k counterpart produced by **Amstrad** due to their price of around four pounds. The price for this marvel of technology, only £239, but it will not be available until the New Year.

Next out of the magic briefcase came something that would have no hesitation at all in buying. A five and one quarter inch one megabyte drive. It is a little less expensive than the 3 inch version and also scores highly by using redeems disks that cost only about 50p upwards to buy. Instead of sitting on the top of the machine it has to sit beside it due to its dimensions. Like the 3 inch drive it is totally AMSDOS compatible and in the future may have the option of becoming drive A: The system comes with the *AM-RAM* as this is needed to interface the machine with AMSDOS. The version that we had was not cased but as usual it will come in the standard black case like all the *AM-BYTE* drives. At £229 it may be a little expensive for some people but after a while the price of the disks that it uses will make it pay for itself in a very short period of time. If you are to order one from **Siren** before Christmas then you can buy it at a discount price of £209.

Joyce owners are not let down either as **Siren** has produced an interface which sits where the second drive would normally be, and allows you to use many of the five and one quarter drives that are currently on the market. At the moment we don't have a drive that we could link it up to but we hope that a full review of it can be done next month.

Asking about plans for the future, Simon commented that they would like to do a monitor to TV convertor for the Amstrad, but feel that those available may take the market before they could get anything produced. Something that is definitely on the cards for the future is an amplifier with speakers which should retail around the £15 mark.

This little marvel called the AM-RAM will back-up all your ROMS onto floppies.(HUMM!)

SOUNDING THE SIREN

Without a doubt **SIREN** software have produced some of the best disk utilities ever seen on the Amstrad range of computers, *DISCOVERY PLUS* is set to consolidate this position yet again. This new TAPE to DISK utility will backup just about all software to tape simply by not trying to be all things to all men. Instead you are supplied with a suite of programs all on one disk, with each one being tailor made to cope with one or two of the great number of special loaders available at the current time.

The first, and probably the most useful, of the copiers is *SLOCK TRANS*. This program enables you to backup those programs that use the *SPEEDLOCK* system of protection. These are quite easy to distinguish from others as they print the message **"Loading: PLEASE WAIT"** at the bottom of the screen. On loading the copier you are greeted with a scrolling message informing you that the other programs first.

OPTION 2 give you a full catalogue of the disk in drive A. Full information about the files on the disk is given, including where it is stored, the file type, that is BASIC, Machine code and so on. You are even given the option to erase or rename any of the programs.

OPTION 3 simply catalogues the disk, it is just like typing CAT from BASIC. Files can also be erased or renamed from this option.

OPTION 4 will put you in CP/M, as long as a CP/M disk is in the drive at the time.

Now comes the reason for the utility. **OPTION 1** will transfer tape programs to disk, but unlike most of the normal versions of this program, this one will, to some extent, modify BASIC programs when machine code routines have been relocated or the name used by the program to load the Mcode is not AMSDOS compatible, that is if the

Neither **AMTIX!** nor **SIREN** condone piracy of any kind. The reason that this product is being reviewed is that it is a useful utility and should be confined to making backup copies of original software for personal use only.

program has been installed, after which you can enter the name that you wish the program to be called on the disk. Hitting **Enter** will now start the tape recorder and the program to be backed up should load as normal.

Instead of running when the load has finished, *SPLTRANS* saves most of the memory to disk except for the screen. It is for this reason that you must have at least 52k on a disk or you may run out of space. After saving, the program just saved, should run. If you now wish to test to see if the game has saved properly you must reset the machine and load the program using the filename you gave it in the first part of the operation. The only time programs failed to transfer was when there was a loading fault, and not any problem with *SPLTRANS*. The real beauty of the program is that no modifications or special utilities are needed in order to run the backed up piece of software.

A version of the original *DISCOVERY* is also supplied on the disk. Users of the original *Discovery* will notice that there is no *SPEEDLOCK* option on this version, *SPLTRANS* now takes over that function. Instead this program transfers all those programs with normal AMSTRAD loaders, that is those that load in blocks.

As the transfer program takes a while to explain, I will go over the file name is longer than 8 characters. The only problems could stem from programs in which the loader reverts to tape again, this has already been thought off in a later program.

Of course there will be times when automatic mode cannot work, one of which is when the BASIC file is more than 16k long.

In manual mode you can rename files and relocate machine code but the program makes no attempt to alter any BASIC program. *DISCOVERY* has only been included on the disk as a last resort as the programs **TD** and **TD1** are made to replace it, but it is still a useful utility when all else just won't work.

TD will enable you to transfer normal and headerless programs to disk. The only problem that arises from the use of this program is that the files cannot run independently of the main package. Instead once the program has been loaded it is given a number and is saved with this number as its filename once it has finished loading. To load the program again you must select the load option in the **TD** menu and then give it the number of the file that you wish to load. You are now faced with deciding which type of load you want to use. This is due to different types of protection being used on headerless and normal programs. Most will use type 1 but if this doesn't work then try type 2. You may also find that programs take a while to load, but at least you don't have to wait as long as with the tape versions.

TD1 allows you to copy a program just by hitting the **CTRL** key. Although this doesn't work with every program it should get around the programs that revert back to tape after the loader program starts running. Instead you can wait until the program has loaded and hit the **CTRL** key. This option seemed to work very well on most programs we tried, the only snag is that programs saved on a CPC464 will only work on a CPC464, the same going for the CPC6128, though this is a small safeguard against piracy.

DISCOVERY PLUS represents the most complete suite of program copiers and, although not quite as good as having a push button type copier such as the **MULTIFACE TWO**, it is quite a lot cheaper at £14.99 (disk only) and should do for all your needs. **DISCOVERY PLUS** gets a well earned **SILVER SCREWDRIVER**.



INCREASING MEMORY

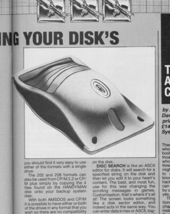
It has been known for so time that it is possible to have up to 44 tracks on a 3 inch disk and so increase its capacity, but no one has even tried to utilise it . . . until now! **Siren Software** have once again come up with the goods and produced a disk enhancement package that gives you up to 208k of storage space on each side of a disk, an increase of 30k over a normal data format disk.

The program comes only on disk and includes seven programs that compliment the use of large format disks.

First, and most important, is the disk formatter, know as *SUPERFORM*. When selected you are given the option of reading the help file on that particular option. This means that there is no manual to skim over while using the program, but SIREN having thought of this problem have included a "Print Manual" option in the main menu which dumps all the help files to the printer in a form that can be assembled into a manual. *SUPERFORM* will format disks to any of the standard formats, DATA, IBM etc, as well as two new formats known as **SUP202** and **SUP208**. The first will format a disk to have 202k free space and also saves 4 short programs to allow you to utilise this space. The first two are **SUPERA** and **SUPERB**. These configure the system to work with 202k format disks on drives A: and B: respectively. Running the appropriate program and cataloguing the disk will present you with a disk containing a healthy 200k and two more programs. **STDA** and **STDB** revert the system back to normal AMSDOS. If you don't want or need to go back to the normal system then you can erase these programs leaving you with a very healthy 202k disk. It is important however to leave the patches **SUPERA** and **SUPERB** on the disk so that you can access the 202k format, erasing these programs will not damage the format or release any more space but instead mean that you must run the patches from a different disk before you can use any of the superformatted disks.

The **SUP208** format, on the other hand, utilises the whole disk and so you cannot store the patch files on the same disk. Instead you must run the patches from another disk before you can use the 208k format disk. The patches are the same as those used for the 202 format and so you must either create a disk of 202 format first so that you can run the patches or you can run the patches from within the *HANDYMAN* package. Ideally you should have two drives, one which contains the main program and a second that contains a 208k format disk to store data on, but

ING YOUR DISK'S



you should find it very easy to use either of the formats with a single drive.

The 202 and 208 formats can also be used from CP/M 2.2 or CP/M plus simply by copying the 4 files found on the *HANDYMAN* disk onto your backup system disk.

With both AMSDOS and CP/M it is possible to have either or both of the drives in any format that you wish so there are no compatibility problems, and once the system is set up you just use it as normal.

The **TRANSFILE** utility works in the same manner as filecopy does under CP/M but is specially configured to work with super format disks. As each file is read from disk you are asked whether you wish to copy it or not. Hitting **Y** will mean that the file is to be copied while **N** will just skip onto the next file in the list. Once all the selections have been made the program will set about copying the files. Due to small differences between normal text files and files used under CP/M the program will, on encountering one or the other, ask you to distinguish between the two manually. The program will not copy SYS files, so they must be set to DIR before they can be copied, and also any programs that are read only will be set to read/write on the destination disk. Protected programs, thankfully, remain protected.

DISC RELEASE will copy a whole disk onto tape so that those little used programs that you may need at times can be stored and no longer clutter up valuable disk space. The tape can then be loaded back onto the disk at a later date though the disk that you use to load the software back onto will be totally changed so it is impossible to merge software from the tape onto a disk with programs already on. This is because the tape simply writes over everything on the disk.

DISC SEARCH is like an ASCII editor for disks. It will search for a specified string on the disk and then let you edit it to your heart's content. The best, and most fun, use for this was changing the scrolling messages in games. Customisation, that's where it's all at! The screen looks something like a disk sector editor, and indeed acts in the same way. You can enter data in hex or ASCII, toggle between pages of text and search for other strings. It differs from the normal sector editors in that you cannot select a specific track or sector, you may only step through onto the next sector.

FILE SEARCH is in the same vain as the **DISC SEARCH** program, only it will instead find a program on a disk and allow you to edit it rather than shooting in the dark if you wanted to edit one particular program.

FILEMATE will dump out a specified file in any one of 4 formats. An ASCII dump, A HEX dump, LIST file and TYPE file utilities. Each will either print their output to the screen or printer. The difference between LIST file and TYPE file are subtly different. TYPE simply prints out the file as it would do under CP/M. LIST on the other hand also prints line numbers.

The last program is **MENU MAKER**. It is in fact a disk file manager which will allow you to run any file that you select using the cursor. It will show up the files under all user numbers and once one has been selected it will load the file in that particular user.

This is just about the best disk utility that I have had to use and perfectly compliments **MASTER DISC** which is available separately.

Once again **SIREN** get a **GOLD SCREWDRIVER** award.

THE AMSTRAD CP/M

by Andrew Clarke and David Powys-Lybbe. price £12.95 paper back, £14.95 ring bound, MML Systems

There are three types of people who might consider this 520 page book, those who know nothing, those who know a little, and those who know a lot. And there are three levels of knowledge they might want to get to; knowing what to do (without knowing why), knowing quite a bit, and true hackerdom. So the question is, can anyone get to where they want by using this book? The answer is yes, almost anyone can.

The book is divided into five sections, each containing a number of chapters. The first section gives a history and introduction to CP/M. Section two is about using CP/M, and his will probably have the greatest appeal to a less experienced CPC6128 or PCW8256 user. Writing CP/M software takes up the biggest chunk of the book and includes all those horrendous bits of jargon, clearly explained and made as simple as they will ever be. *GSX*, the graphics system extensions, is very well explained. Section four deals with running languages such as *Pascal* and *C* from within CP/M, and has finally explained to me what a macro assembler is.

Finally section five is appendices concerning such things as how the C128/8256 implementations differ from the usual, and giving an "insight" into the workings of the CCP (*Console Command Processor*).

The books ends with seven pages of index which could have been twice as long, but apparently the authors wanted to keep it simple!

If you neither know, nor care, about the difference between *CDOS* and *BIOS* and simply want access to the wealth of programs which run under CP/M, this book has an idiots guide ("How to switch on your Amstrad in four easy lessons"). It will teach you how to copy files and discs, and give you the information required by any "Install" program. The book was originally intended to be given away free with every Amstrad, and is very useful for any CP/M user. Note despite the titles this book is very useful for CP/M unplus (2.2) owners as well, because the special version 3 features are always contrasted with those of version 2.2.

If you already know quite a bit, and want to know everything, then this really is the book for you. It contains every conceivable call, vector, jumpblock, and table, from GSX to XREF via ASM and SID. The book is so long that the original publishers refused to produce it, saying about half the number of pages would be better, and this is mainly due to the very clear and comprehensive layout of tables and maps of, for example, page zero initialisation.

If you didn't understand any of that, then don't worry: neither did I! Seriously though, the more normal user shouldn't think that he's paying for a lot of useless stuff, as this book is cheaper than certain other books of half the length. Also, don't worry that the examples are in *C* and *Assembler*: if you don't know these languages you are not going to need the examples which include writing a RSX print spooler. Unfortunately, one set of users will be very slightly let down: the book contains lists of all the commands for ED, PIP etc but doesn't provide very much in the way of examples of use, especially for *SID*, the debugger. So having been given the commands, the user still has to fiddle a bit to get the best results.

A Note of Fiddling: fiddling is getting a disk which doesn't have anything important on it, putting a few of the CP/M bundled programs onto it, and pressing buttons at random to see what happens. This is a surprisingly effective way to learn about a piece of software, especially if you intersperse fiddling with reading the manual! User-friendly programs written for "dumb-users" try to prevent the need for fiddling, so you get acceptable results much quicker, but don't have half as much fun.

So if you are willing to fiddle a bit, this book is the ideal companion. If you know nothing, and want to know everything NOW, then spend £300 on a course on CP/M.

The typeface is laser printer output, as opposed to "proper" typesetting, but after about two pages you don't notice it — in fact it is a benefit. The best thing about this book is how it explains what CP/M is. I won't spoil the fun, but it involves hamburgers! Similarly, *RSX* and *GSX* (Resident and Graphic System Extensions) are made simple, and their importance highlighted, in an amusing manner.

On a "pages per pound" scale, this book scores much higher than most others, being the cost of a disk-based game but far longer-lasting.

Once you get into the world of CP/M, you'll wonder how you ever did without it!

Michael Jampel

News

HAVING A HAPPY BIRTHDAY





Software companies seem to come and go but Bracknell based Mikro-Gen continue to go from strength to strength. They even managed to survive a party of journalists, including our very own Crumbly, who arrived to help them celebrate their recent fifth birthday party.

It's amazing how often we read about a well known software company going to the wall or being taken over by one of the big boys in the business. In this day and age it's nice to see that a software house can continue to survive and publish successive games that appeal to the people who really count - the customers!

Mikro-Gen are one of the few companies who have been around since the "beginning" yet still remain totally independent. Their recent fifth birthday coincided, more or less, with their moving into new, purpose built premises in the United Kingdom's answer to America's Silicon Valley, Bracknell in Berkshire.

Headed by managing director, Mike Meek, **Mikro-Gen** are one of the few software houses which incorporate all aspects of software publishing under one roof, from the initial game idea, through programming and duplicating, right down to the despatch of the finished product to distributors. This enables the company to keep a close eye on all stages of production, ensuring quality control of the highest standard.

Managing director, Mike Meek, has a serious discussion with our very own ultra-cool Crumbly.

The greatest asset of any company is its staff, and this would appear to be very true of **Mikro-Gen**. When the company was formed, five years ago, Mike Meek had a well paid job with Data Processing Customer Engineering, a mainframe maintenance company. He joined forces with another computer literate, Andrew Lawrie. Since then the company has grown substantially. Mike's wife, Doris, came aboard as company secretary. Linda Peacock brought her marketing skills, and more recently Rod Cobain has joined as Sales Director.

Mikro-Gen operates like a close-knit family, and there appears to be a strong loyalty amongst the employees. In the early days freelance programmers were employed, but today there is a growing in-house team. The longest serving programmer is Chris Hinsley who has been with the company since 1983. Nick Jones has worked for them for over a year, while Stuart Hibbert has been a team member for over six months. Recent additions to the team have been Leo Skirenko and James Gardener.

Mikro-Gen is revamping its image, and has recently thrown out the old rainbow coloured packaging and incorporated the rainbow into the new logo. It has also introduced a reviewers' club where local youngsters, who own a variety of machines, come in and are given the opportunity to see forthcoming releases in their early stages. The only "fee" for the club is in the form of written comments and constructive criticism. The main problem with the reviewers' club is dragging the youngsters away from the games at the end of the night. Sessions tend to carry on for much longer than intended, resulting in certain members of the **Mikro-Gen** staff getting into work the following morning looking decidedly "bleary eyed".



The star of the day - the one and only Nosferatu the Vamp.

FANGS FOR THE MEMORY

Never one to miss out on a bit of wine, women and song, **Richard Eddy** tramped off down to London to see the delectable Mandy Keyho in a dingy old crypt, for the launch of *Nosferatu The Vampyre*.

Have you ever noticed what a nice tube station Tottenham Court Road is? No? You really should take a look some time. I did while I was trying to work out where Bloomsbury Road was. Tottenham Court Road isn't that good actually because it doesn't tell you where Bloomsbury Road is!

Leave tube in the hope of a sign - no luck but found a friendly Chestnut seller instead. "Bloomsbury Road? Second on the left guv" Tramp off down a busy looking street but there is no sign of a crypt, spot Claire Edgley disappearing into Rainbird HQ. "Hello Claire" says I but no response. Silly old moo.

Walk a bit further and see big red sign saying "To the Crypt" Great!

Red lights abound, smoke pours from a generator and Mandy mumbles that the great Nosferatu is about to appear. Wooopeee!

Mandy disappears off as I help myself to a glass of Bull's Blood, mmmm nice.

Moments later Mandy reappears with several others from the **Piranha** team dragging, somewhat precariously, a coffin behind them. The lights dim and the coffin lid stirs - out stumbles a rather dazed Nosferatu, slightly the worse for wear after his journey. Screams rage as he goes for some of our necks, ouch! Decide the best course of action would be to hide behind Mandy — good thinking, get another glass of Bull's Blood.

Quite a few dignitaries turned up for the bash including the **Design Design** team - programmers of *Nosferatu*, Fergus McNeil from **Delta 4** who is currently writing the first **Piranha** adventure, *The Colour Of Magic*; Don Priestly of *Trapdoor* fame and the editor of 2000 AD, to celebrate the forthcoming launch of the *Rogue Trooper* game.

In the end it was a nice day out.

GRAPHIC (MAD) MAX

A software package called *Max* has been launched by **Advanced Memory Systems** of Warrington for the CPC range of machines. It provides a graphic extension to the disk filing system and offers a front end WIMP environment with a wide range of disk management operations. It works with keyboard, joystick and with the *AMX Mouse*.

Disk cataloguing into a window of up to two disk drives is possible, with the catalogue presented in icon form and sorted by name, file type, or length. Information which can be displayed includes the number of files and bytes used, and disk sectors loaded and edited.

Files can be executed in basic and machine code and their details displayed. They can be deleted, renamed, protected or unprotected, copied between drives, dumped and listed. There is a control panel for the selection of screen colours, keyboard delay, repeat rates, mouse sensitivity, and the mode entered upon leaving the Max. The screen can be dumped to Epson compatible printers, and there is a Help and Note Pad facility. It is available on disk with a manual and reference guide and costs £19.95.

FROM MELBOURNE TO MASTERTRONIC

Former **Melbourne House** supremo, Geoff Heath, has joined budget label specialist, **Mastertronic**, as head of new business development. Geoff says his new post will give him the scope to explore new areas of potential growth.

During his spell at **Melbourne House**, Geoff led them to many successes, including a Best Game of the Year award for *Way of the Exploding Fist*. Prior to that he was involved in bringing out 1984's best selling game, *Ghostbusters*, while working for **Activision**.



Level 9 and Delta 4 read the fine print in the contract. Left to right they are Mike Austin, Fergus McNeill and Stephanie Stranger.

JOINING FORCES

Adventure wizards, **Level 9** have signed a contract with satirical authors, **Delta 4** for a spoof adventure which should be published next Easter.

It is the first time the two have got together to work on a project, although both companies are well known individually for their humourous adventures. **Delta 4** writes hilarious lampoons like *Bored of the Rings* while **Level 9**'s range of more traditional adventures are full of puns and witty responses.

The title and storyline of the new game is being kept a secret, but Mike Austin, a partner at **Level 9** says it is very funny and could be the funniest spoof adventure ever!

SPEAKEASIES AND BOOTLEGGERS

Head back to the good old days of mobsters and prohibition with the latest offering from **Mikro-Gen**. *Cop Out* transports you back in time to America in the 1920's. You can take part in battles between the mobsters and the police, search out speakeasies, and track down illegal stills in this shoot-em-up game.

Programming for this game took almost six months to complete. The player takes the role of a cop on the streets, and has to rely on his quick reflexes and wit to wipe out crime. he does have the law on his side, and the law, in its wisdom, has seen fit to provide him with a special gun with an even more special sight. Once you get the hang of it, this gun helps reduce the opposition quite drastically.

If you fancy playing the role of a goody-goody then *Cop Out* costs £8.95 on cassette and an extra £5 for the disk version.

JONATHON'S GAME ON THE WAY



One of the first games to be released on **Domark**'s new **Streetwise** label is the result of an award winning game design submitted by CRASH reader, Jonathon Eggleton.

Kat-Trap has been programmed by the Manchester based company, **Design Design**, in close co-operation with Jonathon. The program gives a fast and furious romp through a myriad of scrolling screen sets with the player controlling a mechanical cat-like robot with exceptionally springy legs. It bounces and blasts its way around each level, battling against an array of fearsome opponents.

The game is available for the CPC range of micros and costs £8.95 on cassette and £14.95 on disk.

WATCHING THEM WATCHING US

AMTIX! Towers was recently visited by two members of the recently formed Amstrad Group Federation. They braved British Rail, travelling all the way from Manchester to Ludlow to write a feature on our glorious mag for their own periodical.

While they were busy interviewing our very own Crumbly Ed., and snapping pictures of anything that moved (or stood still!), we decided to turn the tables on them. Cameron managed to take some very candid shots of both Clint Heyliger, the acting president, and his lovely aide, Lesley Deakin. We have to say nice things about them because they both enjoy participating in martial arts!



Our ultra-cool editor obviously enjoys being interviewed by attractive ladies.

AMTIX Christmas Special

IT'S HELLO TO JANE

Jane Denning has joined **Melbourne House** (Publishers) Ltd. as marketing manager for the full range of computer books and software. She joins the company from Oxford University Press (USA).

TRIVIAL

Following on from the huge initial success of *Trivial Pursuit* on the CPC machines, **Domark** have now announced plans to bring it out for the PCW8256 micro.

All of the games' popular features are still there, including TP himself. If you want to test your knowledge with Joyce it will cost you £19.95.

Domark have also brought out a follow up for the CPC micros, entitled *Trivial Pursuit Young Players*. It sells at £14.95 cassette and £19.95 disk and is just as entertaining as the original *Genus Edition*. If you already have the *Genus Edition* you can buy the latest edition as a separate question pack which comes in one format which is fully compatible across the Amstrad, Spectrum and Commodore machines.

THE FIRST CENSORED GAME

Software company, **CRL**, have released the first computer game with a 15's certificate. Based on the book by Bram Stoker *Dracula* is both a graphics and text adventure game. It was primarily the horrific language of the text which prompted the British Board of Film Classification to take this unprecedented step.

The writer and programmer of the game, Rod Pike, alerted **CRL** to the fact the program might be unsuitable for younger children.

The implication is that from now on every computer game may have to be vetted and awarded a suitable certificate.

MURDER OFF MIAMI

The latest adventure from **CRL**, *Murder Off Miami*, is being launched simultaneously on Amstrad, Commodore and Spectrum. It is a 'solve it yourself' mystery based on the novel of the same name by Dennis Wheatley.

Set in the 1930's, you play Detective Kettering who is called to investigate an alleged suicide. The suicide, or murder, occurred in a boat just off the coast of Miami. The question is did the deceased jump or was he pushed. Several people on board have a motive, but your detective work must decide the verdict.

If you enjoy adventures this one will cost you £7.95 for all versions. A follow up is planned for early next year entitled *The Mainsay Massacre*.

AMTIX! COMPETITION

THREE NIGHTS IN PARIS FOR TWO MUST BE WON!!

3*** HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

ALL entrants will receive a £3.00 voucher redeemable against any INFOGRAMES game from their mail order department!

AMTIX Christmas Special

INFOGRAMES are a French company who now have a more than steady foothold in Britain, thanks to them employing the mass talents of the ever jolly, Dave Crossweller. **Infogrames** have also wasted no time in producing games over here and their celebratory release *The Sidney Affair* will soon be gracing the software shops shelves.

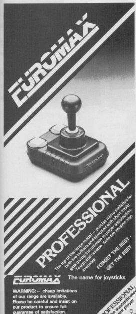
To herald these not totally unconnected events, **INFOGRAMES** are going to foot the bill for a lucky winner, and their chosen travelling companion, to jet off to Paris for three nights where they can sample the delights of France and stroll along Parisian walkways.

The prize consists of the air flight to Paris and back home, travel to and from Charles De Gaulle Airport to the hotel in Paris, and accomodation and continental style breakfast in the hotel. All the winner will have to do is find their own way to either Gatwick or Heathrow, and back home again; pay for other meals while in France, and pay for any other expenses incurred.

So what have you got to do to deserve such a prize. Wash David Crossweller's car for a year? (not nice!); Repaint the **INFOGRAMES** mansion in London using your tongue as a brush? (yeech!)

No all you have to do is to write a diary of the three days you may win in Paris noting down all the places that you intend to go and the sights that you want to see.

Simple eh? Just scribble down your would be diary of the three days from Friday to Sunday on no more than 2 sheets of A4 paper and send them to **PARISIAN WALKWAYS, CHATEAU AMTIX! PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here before the 8th January. Et Bon Chance mes petits!



WRAP UP YOUR AMSTRADS IN A NICE COSY COVER AS A CHRISTMAS TREAT

Let's face it, our Amstrad machines are delicate things, they must be treated with the same love and affection as you would treat your nearest and dearest, be it your wife, pet Beagle — whatever. Then perhaps they deserve even more attention! So we nice people here at AMTIX! Towers have come up an utterly brilliant solution — why not cover them up with a set of warm AMTIX! dustcovers.

AMTIX! have produced a unique dustcover, in a subtle shade of grey with black double stitching and emblazened with the new AMTIX! logo for the PCW8256 and PCW8512 machines, the CPC464, CPC664, and CPC6128 micros — with either green screen or colour monitors — as well as for the new IBM clone PC1512. The covers for the Joyce machines come in three parts, one for the monitor, one for the keyboard, and one to keep your printer clean, while those for the other micros are nifty loking two piece outfits. They are totally resilient to dust, liquids and all sorts of household nasties.

All the covers are exclusively available through AMTIX! mail order.

We are so sure that they won't rip, split or tear we're giving a two year guarantee with them. Make your cheques or postal orders payable to **Newsfield Limited**. We are convinced these covers are a major contribution to Amstrad safety.

DUST COVER ORDER FORM.

Dear AMTIX!

I'm worried about my Amstrad and would be grateful if you could send me — set(s) of dust covers. I enclose a cheque/postal order for the relevant price per set.

I want ( ) set(s) of Joyce dust covers at £9.95 per set including post and packing.

I want ( ) set(s) of dust covers for my CPC464, CPC664, CPC6128 (with CTM640 — colour monitor) at £9.95 per set including post and packing.

I want ( ) set(s) of dust covers for my CPC464, CPC664, CPC6128 (with GT64 — green screen) at £9.95 per set including post and packing.

I want ( ) set(s) of dust covers for my PC1512 at £9.95 per set including post and packing.

PLEASE FILL IN THE APPROPRIATE SECTION VERY CLEARLY.

NAME ....

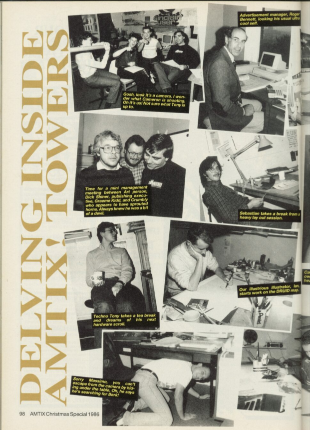
ADDRESS ....

....

..........**POSTCODE** ....

Send your orders to:

AMTIX! DUST COVERS OFFER, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB.



DELVING INSIDE AMTIX! TOWERS

Gosh, look it's a camera. I wonder what Cameron is shooting. Oh it's us! Not sure what Tony is up to.

Advertisement manager, Roger Bennett, looking his usual ultra cool self.

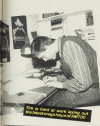
Time for a mini management meeting between Art person, Dick Shiner, publishing executive, Graeme Kidd, and Crumbly who appears to have sprouted horns. Always knew he was a bit of a devil.

Sebastian takes a break from a heavy lay out session.

Techno Tony takes a tea break and dreams of his next hardware scroll.

Our illustrious illustrator, Ian, starts work on the DRUID map.

Sorry Massimo, you can't escape from the camera by hiding under the table. Oh, he says he's searching for Berk!



Tim is hard at work laying out the latest mega issue of AMTIX!

Our super Sub Editor, Ciaran, obviously enjoys having his picture taken.

Cameron comes out of his very own Red Light Area after a heavy night on the town.

Young Nick caught deep in concentration.

The way in which a magazine is put together seems to fascinate readers. So we thought we would treat you to a 'behind-the-scenes expose' — the rarely glimpsed world of computer magazine people. Who knows, someone might even turn it into a TV soap — something which Richard Eddy, Massimo Valducci and Tony Clarke would enjoy no end. So fasten your seat belt, sit back for a few pages, and find out from the 'experts' how it's all done . . . or supposed to be done!

THE EDITORIAL MEETING

The first stage of each and every issue of AMTIX! is an Editorial Meeting. These gatherings are vital, not only to ensure that everyone is familiar with what will go into the issue, but to determine what that material will be. AMTIX! Editor, Malcolm Harding is in the chair, where he's no slouch. His function is to clarify everyone's opinions about the biting issues of the month. Also present are Richard Eddy, who as Software Editor, is in charge of sorting out what's to be reviewed and when, our Technical man, Tony Clarke, and our Mafia man, Massimo Valducci. Each person has their own opinions to be expressed as to the attitude the magazine will take to reviews, features and regular spots. Richard usually presents a breakdown on the AMTIX! Challenge for the month — who the challenger is, what game is being played, and so on. Times must be arranged with Cameron Pound, the in-house photographer, to ensure pictorial coverage of the event.

Another vital aspect of the Editorial Meeting is to establish the schedule for the issue — it's always a tight one, especially in the run up to the Christmas and New Year issues. Magazines are done to an unyielding deadline because of the distribution system. One day late out of the printer can mean a week late on the news stand so the deadline must be met no matter what the cost is to man or machine!

It's also at this first meeting that the decision is taken as to who will work on what articles, who is going off to do interviews, who will work on the news etc, etc.

PAGINATION MEETING

Several days after the Editorial Meeting, it is time to decide how the various elements of AMTIX! are going to fit into the issue's page allocation. This is done at something called a Pagination Meeting and this is really where editorial meets art. Production Comptroller, David Western, Art Director, Dick Shiner, and our new editorial supremo, Publishing Executive, Graeme Kidd, join Malcolm Harding and Richard Eddy and between them they hammer out how many pages each item will require. By this time the number of games to be reviewed is hopefully clear, and some idea has been canvassed as to their individual merits and therefore whether they need colour pages or monochrome — that's black and white to the uninitiated — and how many pages. A small contingency figure is allowed for any games which might be late arrivals. Similarly the features are allocated pages as are the regulars and the whole is totted up. David then goes away and, taking into account the requirement for advertising pages, plans the issue on a large 'tick off sheet'. It gets its name from the practice of ticking off completed pages, and it is used throughout the month by the layout artists in the art department and also by Crumbly who has a photostat copy.

PLAYING THE GAME

Reviews play an important part in a magazine like AMTIX! and the integrity of the reviewing team is paramount. Before reviews can be compiled, the games must be played through. Most of the main room in Amtix! Towers is set aside specially for this purpose with several machines, cassette decks and disk drives permanently at the ready. The team — Malcolm Harding, Richard Eddy, Massimo Valducci, and Tony Clarke — each take their turn to see the selection of games up for review. Sometimes, and if required, playing sessions can go on for a considerable time, often until late at night or the next morning! Gradually, a picture is built up in each reviewer's mind as to the merits of each game, but before the writing can begin, some argument must take place over the ratings, since the finished figures are an amalgam of their opinions in an attempt to provide the best balance.

WRITING THE REVIEWS

During the games playing phase, it is mutually worked out who will actually be responsible for writing the introduction section to each review — effectively being the review's author. Malcolm Harding and Richard Eddy tend to be the ones who take the separate elements — intro, three comments and ratings — and compile them into the finished article.

AMTIX! is all electronic. The main writing is done on Apricot XI computers using *Superwriter* as a word processing package, but as there aren't enough Apricots for everybody, we also use Amstrad 8256 machines and portable, battery-or-mains operated NEC keyboards. The latter take up to 12K of written information, and the contents can be dumped to the hard disk in an Apricot within a few seconds.

Generally, the reviews are the first to get written, but at the same time special articles are also being done by whoever has been assigned the task. This sometimes means interviews over the phone, sometimes a trip out complete with micro cassette recorder and camera, and sometimes it means members of a software house visiting our premises.

FROM THE TYPED TO THE PRINTED WORD

How does what we write on an Apricot end up on the magazine's pages? All the various articles, reviews and items slowly build up as individual files on the Apricot's hard disk. When Malcolm has finished 'subbing' — checking that the grammar and spelling are correct (hopefully) — the files are sent to our typesetters, a local firm some five minutes walk away and it is here the real work is done, turning the text into ASCII characters and shunting it all through a Linotypesetter. This computer effectively tells a photoprint unit what letters (identified by their individual ASCII code) to put where, in what size and weight (eg, medium text, **bold text** or *italic*). It also sets the text on various widths to fit the magazine's columns. The result is a thin roll of photo paper containing the file in its finished form. Once it's been checked through editorial, the typesetting goes upstairs to 'Art' for layout. This process continues throughout the schedule right up to a few hours before the last page is ready to leave for the printers.

SCREEN PHOTOGRAPHY

In charge of all photography is Cameron Pound, a Ludlow local. Cameron has a special

room and here on a large table a Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore 64 are permanently set up with their respective monitors. The cameras (35mm for black and white and 3, square for colour transparencies) are focused on the monitor screen with an exposure time of a quarter of a second. This allows 6 TV frames to be photographed, which gets rid of the 'roll bar' effect that a more normal exposure time results in, due to the luminescence of the TV screen.
These films, together with any other photographs that may be needed, are processed and printed in our own darkroom, just around the corner from the screen photography room. Cameron produces contact sheets from which the editorial and art departments can choose which pictures need enlarging. Once the prints have been made, Richard ensures that they are marked up correctly on the back, so that the layout people in 'Art' will know to which piece of text they belong — otherwise we might end up with the wrong screen shot illustrating the review!

PUTTING IT DOWN ON PAPER

The art team (they also work on sister publications CRASH and ZZAP!) is headed by David Western, Art Director, Dick Shiner, Assistant Art Director, Gordon Druce, and Art Supremo, Oliver Frey. All actually do layout as well as their official jobs of directing and guiding the other members. One of the most vital functions is performed by one of Newsfield's longest employed members, Matthew Uffindell, who used to write reviews for CRASH before becoming the process camera operator — more of him in a moment!
The artwork is laid out on 'grid sheets', paper a little larger than the finished page, marked up with the finished page edges, text column widths and other useful information. The grids are printed in a pale blue ink which the process camera 'can't see' when the page is photographed. The typesetting is cut up into suitable column lengths and stuck down in place together with the PMTs (more of that in a mo)! When a page is completed, it is set aside to 'go under the camera'. Close liaison with editorial is essential at this stage to ensure that the right things happen!

THE ROLE OF THE PROCESS CAMERA

AMTIX! (and Newsfield's other publications) is unusual in as much as almost all the technical processes involved, except colour origination and printing, are done in-house. Much of this takes place on the Process Cameras — there are three of them — under Matthew's watchful eye.
Black and white photographs cannot be used in their original state because the entire printing process (even for colour) works on purely black or white — no in between greys like photographs have. So the first thing that must happen is to convert the original 'continuous tone' photograph to a 'half tone' (also called a PMT — Photo Mechanical Tint, a 'tint' being closely placed dots). The photo is placed on the copyboard of the process camera and reproduced by being re-photographed through a specially designed tint screen. The result is a copy of the original, but which is made up entirely of black and white dots. The process camera can also alter the original's size from between 25% and 400% at the same time, so the finished result will fit the layout artist's design for the page.
Similarly, text can be enlarged or reduced if required, or 'reversed out' (white letters on black) by the same machine.
Once pages have been completed, they have to be converted to 'finished film' from which the printer will eventually make the printing plates. The finished page artwork is placed under the process camera and photographed in much the same way as the PMTs were made, except without the tint screen in place, since all the elements now on the page are already in just black and white. The resulting exposure goes onto film negative rather than PMT paper, and is put through a complex processor which develops, fixes and dries the image in 60 seconds. The film negative is then 'spotted' to get rid of any white pin holes caused by dust, and is ready to go off to the printer.

ART AND ADS

In addition to directing the layout process, David and Oliver have other vital functions. Advertisers send us 'colour separations' of their page advertisements. These have to be logged in to ensure we have everything ready for an issue, and tagged with a page number so the printer will know where to put them. It takes a long time!
Oliver, of course, is one of AMTIX!'s two illustrators, the other being relative newcomer, Ian Craig. They do the covers and so on, and their finished colour work, together with any colour editorial pages, have to be sent to an outside 'scanning house'. The function of a 'scanning house' is to take the 'base layout sheet' containing any text in position and marked boxes showing where the transparency pictures or Oliver and Ian's original paintings, are supposed to go, and combine this base with the colour separations of the colour pictures.
Full colour is achieved by printing separate black and white images. There are four colours used — black, magenta, cyan and yellow — and each layer requires its own piece of black and white film containing the information for the four printing plates. Each plate is then inked with its 'process colour'. From the combination of these four, any colour can be produced. A mono page has only one piece of film to print from, but a colour page, obviously, has to have four which will be printed over each other for the final effect. This outside 'repro house' sends the finished colour films direct to the printer to meet up with the mono film coming from AMTIX! Towers.

PRINTING

When the due date arrives, all the film has to be sent to the printing company — in AMTIX!'s case — Carlisle Web Offset in Carlisle, Cumbria. They take all our various films and 'plan' them together in sets of 8 pages, four along the bottom and, head-to-head, four along the top. These 8 page sections are then exposed onto a photo-sensitive plate. The plates are then loaded onto the Web printing machine, 8 on the top roller, another 8 on the bottom roller, to print the 16-page section. These 16 are printed simultaneously with another 16-page mono section and the whole is folded and chopped into sections to make a complete 32-page section ready for collating, stitching and trimming with the rest of the mag. Next year the printers will have a new press which will enable them to print 32 pages at one time in full colour.
The web offset press is bigger than an old steam locomotive, and prints some 30,000 copies an hour. To run it up to full speed takes approximately an hour, during which time numerous adjustments have to be made to ensure all the dots on the four-colour plates are in correct register and the ink balance is correct. So even before the printing run really gets under way, quite a bit of waste paper is produced! This does not go to waste for it is eventually re-cycled.
When the printing and binding is finished, the printer delivers all the copies to a private haulier who is sub-contracted by Carlisle Web Offset. They then deliver bundles of the magazine to all the various wholesale houses throughout the country. The wholesaler, in turn, breaks down the bundles into smaller ones and delivers them to the newsagents, hopefully all in time for the on sale date!
Meanwhile, back at AMTIX! Towers, work is well under way on the following issue of AMTIX! It's a vicious (Grrr) circle and no mistake chums.

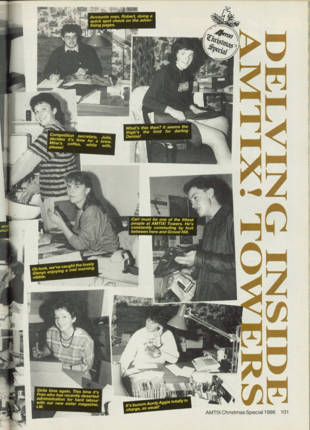
Young Jonathan operating the PMT machine!

Art supremo, Oli, showing off some new dance steps or just being camera shy.

Mail order ladies, Doreen a Pat, enjoying a leisurely lu break.

It's tough at the top of AMTIX! Towers as Assistant Art Director, Gordon, can testify.

DELVING INSIDE AMTIX! TOWERS



Accounts man, Robert, doing a quick spot check on the advertising pages.

What's this then? It seems the thigh's the limit for darling Denise!

Competition secretary, Julie, decides it's time for a brew. Mine's coffee, white with, please!

Carl must be one of the fittest people at AMTIX! Towers. He's constantly commuting by foot between here and Grovel Hill.

Oh look, we've caught the lovely Glenys enjoying a mid morning nibble.

Girlie time again. This time it's Fran who has recently deserted administration for hard labour with our new sister magazine, LM.

It's buxom Aunty Aggie totally in charge, as usual!



THINK OF NAMES FOR THE KAT MEN

AND DESIGN A SHIELD FOR THEM!

Win yourself a FLIPBOT, courtesy of DOMARK

Our sister magazine CRASH ran a competition not so long back where the entrants had to design a computer game with the winning entry being programmed by **Design Design** and publicity kings, **Domark** looking after the marketing side of it all. Well, after two months of the best code crunching and publicity possible, the game should hit the streets in time for Christmas and will soon be available for the Amstrad. *Kat Trap* is the story of one droid's fight against all the odds on the unhospitable planet of the Kat-men.

Fighting against the odds is what I constantly have to do here at AMTIX! Towers. Just getting into my broom cupboard in the morning is difficult enough, for I have to squeeze my way past Malcolm's bathchair without waking him up from his morning 40 winks.

Massimo, our resident naturalised Italian, still has large amounts of Latin blood coursing through his veins if the army of haircream tubs, that I have to negotiate on my way into the AMTIX! little person's room, is anything to go by.

Richard Eddy adds to the problem of finding space around the Towers and although the food that litters the editorial floor doesn't hang around too long, poor Cameron's fridge, in which he has to keep all his very expensive film (the colours go yucky if you let them stay warm for too long!), is always bursting with cottage cheese and pasties for when he gets a sudden urge and shouts "Monster must eat!", and runs off to Cameron's den.

Tony is a fanatic for litter. Unfortunately he loves it and keeps his desk overflowing with nasty spikey bits and bobs of hardware. We think that he just uses them all to hide behind when Malcolm's shouting about the Technical sections of the mag being late!

So, you can see that M.T.Ed, the hero in *Kat Trap* has all my sympathy as he battles his way around the Kat Men's planet.

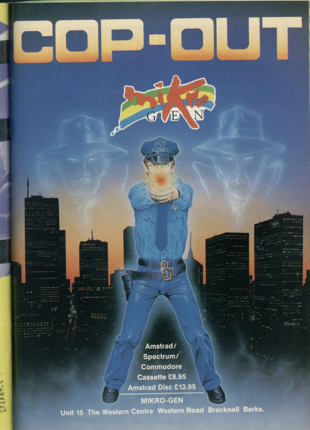
What I could do with would be a little Robot who could clean up after all these people, like the FLIPBOT'S that **Domark** are giving away as the 10 super prizes in this competition.

AMTIX! COMPETITION

Design Design have put a lot of work into this program so you'll have to be prepared to give some effort into your entries if you want to win.

What you must do is to give a list of 10 possible names to the Katmen warriors who inhabit the planet that poor M.T.Ed finds himself on. Once you've done that get out your faithful old arty bits and design a shield that would look the part if wielded by one of your Katmen.

Put your designs on a piece of paper no bigger than 200mm x 310mm and send them to **KATMAN COMPETITION, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here no later than 8th of January. The best 10 entries will win one of these cuddly FLIPBOTS.


COP-OUT
MIKRO GEN
Amstrad/
Spectrum/
Commodore
Cassette £8.95
Amstrad Disc £13.95
MIKRO-GEN
Unit 15 The Western Centre Western Road Bracknell Berks.

WIN A SOFTWARE WARDROBE

You know how annoying it is. You're invited to a swinging programmers' party and rush home to find that your favourite ever-so-trendy designer software house T Shirt or Sweatshirt is either in the wash or leaps from your hands and makes a break for it before you can wear it for the Nth time. Oh woe! Eventually you turn up at the event clothed in Aunty Mabel's hand knitted woolly that you found lurking at the back of the wardrobe and have to endure being the butt of all the jokes for the entire evening.

Well no longer do you have to suffer the jibes and insults of your peers — thanks to **Newsfield** and countless software firms who have all rallied to the call to save you, dear readers, from the misery of Aunt Mabel's Christmas woollies. All your favourite software houses have got together and in the true altruistic spirit of Santa, have all piled various T shirts, sweatshirts, scarves, baseball caps, games and posters into several of the largest jiffybags to give to three prize winners for each of **Newsfield**'s brilliant computer magazines.

All you have to do to enter is to have either a Small, Medium or Large size chest and an envelope with a 18p stamp attached, so anyone that doesn't enter must be very, very large, or less than three feet tall.

So what do you have to do to enter?

Well, by now you will all know every intimate detail concerning our very own Crumbly Editor, Malcolm. He's not a bad guy really and we believe we should do our best to give him an original late Christmas present. What we want you to do is come up with the most novel idea of a Christmas gift for him. It can be very original, very mega, or very witty. The best ideas will win the complete wardrobe. Send your entries to **CRUMBLY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT, AMTIX! Towers, P O Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** and please remember to include your CHEST SIZE. Entries must be in by the 8th of January.

NEVER HAVE TO WASH A T-SHIRT FOR A YEAR

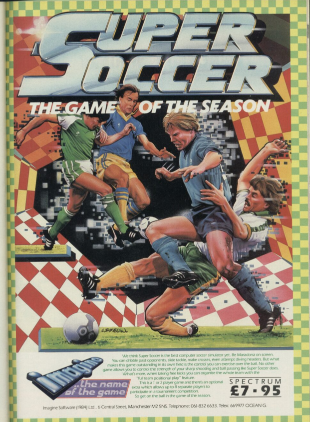
AMTIX! COMPETITION

(just wear a new one each time one gets soiled!)

THE AMTIX! INDEX FOR ISSUES 1-12

Your ever so helpful minions here at AMTIX! Towers have compiled, for your convenience and delectation, an index of all the software games reviewed since our glorious mag hit the news stands. This, we're sure, will come in jolly handy as you'll be able to look up all your fave games through eons past. And here is how it works: First the game name and it's overall percentage rating, then the producer's name and finally the issue and the page number. Simple isn't it?

TITLE / % / PRODUCER / ISSUE / PAGE


SUPER SOCCER
THE GAME OF THE SEASON
WAKELIN.
We think Super Soccer is the best computer soccer simulator yet. Be Maradona on screen. You can dribble past opponents, slide tackle, make crosses, even attempt diving headers. But what makes this game outstanding in its own field is the control you can exercise over the ball. No other game allows you to control the strength of your sharp shooting and ball passing like Super Soccer does. What's more, when taking free kicks you can organise the whole team with the "full team positional play" feature.
This is a 1 or 2 player game and there's an optional extra which allows up to 8 separate players to participate in a tournament competition.
So get on the ball in the game of the season.
Imagine
..the name of the game
SPECTRUM
£7·95
Imagine Software (1984) Ltd., 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS. Telephone: 061-832 6633. Telex: 669977 OCEAN G.

TOP TWENTY FOR JANUARY

Here we go again, the Top 20 as decided by AMTIX! readers. The figures in brackets are last month's positions.

YOUR VOTE COULD WIN YOU £40 OF SOFTWA

Every month us generous types here at AMTIX! Towers will be awarding the grand sum of £40 worth of software to the lucky reader whose form is drawn from Uncle Malcolm's toupee (sorry Crumbly). In addition the next four readers' forms drawn will have their very own AMTIX! T Shirts and hats to love and to cherish.

This month the lucky reader who wins the £40 of software is **Peter Rabbage** of Dawlish, Devon EX7 0DY. T-Shirts and hats will soon be winging their way to, **Alistair Graham** of East Craigs, Edinburgh EH12 8YQ; **Roger Phyall** of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire HP16 0QG,



TOP TWENTY TWITTERS

A very big THANKS to all of you AMTIX! groupies who voted again this month, we don't mind if you don't agree with our joystick junkies. That's what democracy is all about — people arguing, disagreeing and fighting amongst themselves all the time! Keep your forms rolling in, that's very important if the chart is to be truly representative.

It did not take long for that old favourite *Elite* to be knocked off the number one spot again, being replaced instead by the excellent *Spindizzy* from **Electric Dreams**.

There is one new entry this month, **Domark**'s latest *Trivial Pursuit*, and two re-entries, *Bruce Lee* and *Bombjack*.

It's most important to fill in your scores, if you want a mention in the new regular Saffron's Scoreboard feature. Do fill in all the form, we noticed some people have been skipping bits, now that's very naughty, so fill in all of it, y'hear?



FT WARE

Stephen Finlan of South Yardley, Birmingham B25 8EQ; and **Will Southcott** of Fence, Burnley BB12 9HN.

Well done you lot and could you all write to Auntie Julie Yaxley, our new competitions secretary at AMTIX! Towers, 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ stating your chest sizes for the T-Shirts as soon as possible please. In fact it would be a good idea if everyone could put their T Shirt size alongside their name when they fill in the coupon. Thank you!

SAFFRON'S CHRISTMAS SCOREBOARD

Yuletide greetings my gaming gastronaughts - so you want to know who are the top gamesplayers in the country this Christmas? Well cast your eyes below and see if your name is there.

BATMAN (Ocean)
13,860 Ian Longion, Eastwood
8,264 Luigi Antonioni, London
7,908 Lakhveer Sahota, Wolverhampton

BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
802,220 Luigi Antonioni, London
361,880 Steven Plamer, Aylesbury
354,540 Richard Eddy, AMTIX! Towers

CAULDRON II (Palace)
Completed Lee Martin, Churchdown

24,700 Daniel Webster, Buckingham

COMMANDO (Elite)
128,080 Michael Stirling, West Ferry

ELITE (Firebird)
655,359,999 Tony Clarke, AMTIX! Towers
49,692,192 Credits Andrew Mpouzer
49,1449 Credits Ewan Mains, Hamilton

FIFTH AXIS (Loriciels)
99%, Shane Gilmartin, Malahide
86%, Saffron Trevaskis, AMTIX! Towers

GET DEXTER (PSS/ERE)
248,500 Luigi Antonioni, London
144,400 James Chan, Rodley
141,500 James Gent, Newcastle upon Tyne

GHOSTBUSTERS (Activision)
Completed Andre Micallef, Malta

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS (Elite)
268,480 Paul Jolleys, Wigan
212,400 Brad Howarth, Saltford.
104,600 Simon Fincher, Evesham

GREEN BERET (Imagine)
1,164,680 Paul Jolleys, Wigan
164,580 David Edwards, Stockton-On-Tees
158,180 Darren Hill, South Normaltron

JACK THE NIPPER (Gremlin Graphics)
100% Brian Stack, Ealing
100% Michael stirling, West Ferry
92% Luigi Antonioni, London

KNIGHT TYME (Mastertronic)
100% Jeremy Nargi, Hove
100% Daniel Webster, Buckingham
100% Peter White, Sheffield

KUNG FU MASTER (US Gold)
166,900 Sarfraz Afzal, Doonfoot
142,300 Jonathon Agha South Norwood
104,000 Paul Jolleys, Wigan

MATCH DAY (Ocean)
56 — 1 Nathan Havell, Halstead
11 - 0 Andre Micallef, Malta

SORCERY (Amsoft)
100% Completed, Tony Clarke, AMTIX! Towers
106,447 David Rowland, Kilmarnock
101,212 Chris Davies, Sherwood

SPELLBOUND (Mastertronic)
Completed Andrew Foster, Birkdale
Completed Paul Gerrard, Headly Down
Completed Daniel Webster, Buckingham

SPINDIZZY (Electric Dreams)
106 Jewels Andre Page, Bristol
396,950 Maurice Bowness, Merseyside
243,248 Antony Power, Bognor Regis

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
92% Luigi Antonioni
90% D Deeley, Warwick

THRUST (Firebird)
16,750 Daniel Webster, Buckingham

TOMAHAWK (Digital Integration) David Hedges, Upchurch

TURBO ESPRIT (Durell)
35,000 David Gibbon, County Durham

WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST (Melbourne House)
2,750,600 Eamonn Berdford, Rossendale

WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)
998,560 Sohail Akram, Rochdale
579,700 Mark Lloyd, Co Kildare
545,660 Jije Apted, Wembley

YIE AR KUNG FU (Imagine)
62,520,630 Luigi Antonioni, London
7,152,350 Jije Apted, Wembley
1,031,800 Michael Man, Digmoor

It's the end of the show for the Christmas special — it's time for us to go. We hope we've brought you laughter and joy! So until we meet again this time next year it's goodbye, goodbye, goodbye. Scores on the board will be here next month with the first highscorers of 87. So post them off this very minute to: SAFFRON'S SCOREBOARD, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB. Until next year I hope you all have an extremely mega Christmas and a noxious New Year.

Saffron Trevaskis

AMTIX! READERS TOP TWENTY CHART VOTING FORM

Please write in CAPS in an eyestrain free manner.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

The World's five hippest games in order of preference are:
TITLE
1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

My machine is a 464/664/6128/8256 (delete as applicable).If I am a winner the game I would like is:

....

Send your coupon to:

AMTIX! TOP TWENTY, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

AMTIX! Retailers

London/South East

'Chips' Direct Data Ltd, 53 Rugby Road, Worthing, Sussex BN11 5NB. **HS SCA**

Ultima, Unit 28, White Lion Walk, Guildford, Surrey. **HS SCA**

Suburbia, 268 Streatfield Road, Kenton, Middlesex HA3 9BY. **HS SCA**

Speedysoft, The Blacksmiths, Radnage Common, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 4DH. ☎ 024026 3703. **HS SA**

Software Plus, Liberty Shopping Mall, East Sq, Basildon, Essex; 336 Chartwell Square, Southend, Essex; 72 North Street, Romford, Essex; 22 St Matthews St, Ipswich, Suffolk; Boulevards, Harpur Centre, Bedford, Beds; 49 High Street, Gillingham, Kent. **S SCA**

Software City, 47 Cheap Street, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5BX. **S SCA**

Slough Computers, 245 High Street, Slough, Berks SL1 1BN. ☎ 21594. **HS SCA**

Shekhana Computer Services, 221 Tottenham Court Road, London W1R 9AF. ☎ 01-800 3156. **HS SCA**

Saga Systems Ltd, 2 Eve Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4JT. **HS S**

Readers Dream, 100a Harlington Road West, Feltham, Middx. ☎ 01-844 0780. **HS SC**

Barry Paul, Leather Lane Music Shop, 67 Leather Lane, London EC1. ☎ 01-405 1270. **S SCA**

Octopus Software, Unit 31, In-Shops, High Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex. **HS SCA**

The Micro Workshop, 12 Station Approach, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8ES. ☎Tel. Epsom 21533. **HS SCA**

Harlow Computer Centre, 17 Staple Tye, Harlow, Essex, CM18 7LX. **HS SCA**

JKL Computers, 7 Winsor Street, Uxbridge, Middx UB8 1AB. **HS SCA**

Games World, 129 King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9JG. ☎ 01-741 4467. **HS SCA**

Gallery Software, 1st floor, 140 The Arndale Centre, Wandsworth, London SW18. **HS SCA**

M. D. Cooper, Computer Software and Retail Sales, 63 High Street, Kempston, Beds. ☎ 0234 852017. **HS SCA**

Canvey Software, Harmer Arcade, Roman Road, London E1. **HS SCA**

Canvey Software, Canvey Market, High Street, Canvey Island, Essex. **HS SCA**

Alan Bedding Photography/Software, 37 Mile End Road, Colchester, Essex. ☎ 0206 851030. **HS SC**

Bracknell Computers, 44 The Broadway, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 1AG. **HS SCA**

Nimbus Computing, 6 Station Road, West Wickham, Kent. ☎ 01-777 3160. **HS SCA**

Discount Software, 120 Lord Street, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8NP. **HS SCA**

Logic Sales Ltd, 19 The Broadway, The Bourne, Southgate, London N14. ☎ 01-882 4942. **HS SC**

Virgin Games Centre, 100 Oxford Street, London W1N 9FB. ☎ 01-637 7911

Virgin Games Centre, 157-161 Western Road, Brighton BN1 2BB. ☎ 0273 725313

Virgin Games Centre, c/o Burtons, 140-144 High St, Bromley, Kent. ☎ 4606895

Virgin Games Centre, Top Man, Oxford Circus, 172 Oxford Street, London W1. ☎ 01-927 7826.

North West

Stewart Electronics, 83 Penny Meadow, Ashton-under- Lyne, Lancs. ☎ 061-339 0504. **HS SCA**

P.V. Microcomputers, 104 Abbey Street, Accrington, Lancs. **HS SCA**

McSoft, Unit 46, Moorgate Indoor Market, Moorgate, Ormskirk, Lancashire. **HS SCA**

Mach II, Langam's, St George's Precinct, Preston. **HS SCA**

Lancashire Micros, 89 Euston Road, Morecambe, Lancs. **HS SCA**

Computer World (UK) Ltd, 208 Chorley Old Road, Bolton, Lancs BL1 3BG. **HS SCA**

Book Bargains, 31 St Andrew's Road South, St Annes, Lancs. **S SCA**

A.A. Discount Software, 112 Marlborough Street, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs OL7 0HA. ☎ 061-330 2376. **S S**

Bit Byte Computers, 144 Witton Street, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5N9. **HS SCA**

City Software, 66 Lime Street, Liverpool L1 1JN. **S SCA**

Computer Games Shop, 3 Royal Oak Buildings, Waterloo Road, Blackpool FY4 2AQ. ☎ 0253 48738. **S SCA**

The Littlewoods Organisation plc, Church Street, Liverpool L70 1AQ (and selected stores). **HS SCA**

H & B Software, Unit 191, Upper Rochdale Market, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 2EB. **S SCA**

H & D Services, 1338 Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1JG. **S SCA**

H. W. Luxton, 236 Smithdown Road, Liverpool L15 5AH. ☎ 051-733 1135. **S SCA**

South/South West

Kash-Kuts, 77 East Street, Southampton. **S SCA**

Computerbase Co., 21 Market Ave, City Centre, Plymouth PL1 1PG. ☎0752 672128. **HS SCA**

Gateway Business Systems Ltd, 6 Station Road, New Milton, Hants BH25 6JU. **HS SCA**

Gerard's Software at Corsham D.I.Y. Centre, 8 The Precinct, Corsham, Wilts SN13 0AS. ☎0249 712650. **HS SCA**

Montage, 8 Holyrood Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 2AH. **S SC**

Manor Park Enterprises, 82 Mellstock Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset. **HS SCA**

K & K Computers, 32 Alfred Street, Weston-s-Mare, Avon. ☎ 0934 419324. **HS SCA**

Kintech Computers, St Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 3NH. **HS SCA**

Judya Records & Computer Software, Unit 29, Exmouth Indoor Market, Exmouth, Devon. ☎ Exmouth 264593. **S SCA**

Fal-Soft Computers, 8 St Georges Arcade, Falmouth, Cornwall. **HS SCA**

Games Inc, 9 Frankfort Gate, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 1QA. **S SCA**

The Fuse Box, 67 Sidwell Street, Exeter, Devon. **HS SCA**

Computer Services, 9 The Green, Crediton, Devon EX17 3LH. **S SC**

Virgin Games Centre, 18 Merchant Street, Bristol BS1 3ET. ☎ 0272 294779.

Virgin Games Centre, 103-105 Armada Way, Plymouth. ☎ 075 2262817.

Midlands

Soft Spot Ltd, 5 George Street, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9YT. ☎ 0295 68921 **HS SCA**

Honeysett Computers Ltd, 17 Union St, Hereford. **HS SCA**

Fast Forward, 29 Smith Street, Warwick, Warwickshire. **HS SCA**

Fast Forward, 39 Parsons Street, Banbury, Oxon. **HS SCA**

ComputaCenta, 17 Campbell Street, Belper, Derby DE5 1AP. **HS SCA**

D.J.S. Micros (Mail Order), 28 High St, Harrington, Northants NN6 9NU. **HS S**

Gordon Harwood Computers, 69/71 High Street, Alfreton, Derby DE5 7DP. **HS SCA**

Northampton Home Computer Centre, 58a Wellingborough Rd, Northampton. **HS SCA**

The Software Centre, 1 Lock Up Yard, Derby. **HS SCA**

Allen James Computers, 831 Stratford Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham B11 4DA. ☎ 021-778 5737. **HS SCA**

Comtazia, 204 High St, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1QQ. **HS SCA**

Bull Ring Computers Ltd, 1 Waterloo Terrace, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 4EG. **HS SCA**

R & B Computer Software, 6 Waterloo Road, Hinckley, Leics. **HS SCA**

Computer Market, 27 Goosegate, Nottingham. ☎ 586454. **HS SCA**

Honeysett Computers Ltd, 17 Union St, Hereford HR1 2BT. **HS SCA**

Intoto, 1 Heathcoat Street, Hockley, Nottingham NG1 3AF. **HS SCA**

Long Eaton Software Centre, 91 College Street, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 4GE. **HS SCA**

Microware, 5 St Peter's Lane, Leicester. Also at Venture House, 7 Leicester Rd, Loughborough, and Fords, 191/195 Victoria Centre, Lower Parliament St, Nottingham. **HS SCA**

Virgin Games Centre, 98 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6SX. ☎ 021-236 1577

North East

U. K. Software Exchange Club. SAE to 15 Tunwell Greave, Sheffield S5 9GB **S SC**

Treasure Chest, 220 Beverley Road, Hull, N. Humberside HU5 1AH. **S SCA**

Tomorrow's World, 15 Paragon Street, Hull, N. Humberside HU1 3NA. **HS SCA**

Thirsk Home Computer Centre, Royal Oak Yard, Market Place, Thirsk, N. Yorkshire YO7 1HQ. ☎ 0845 25332. **HS SCA**

System 7 Electronics, 664 Anlaby High Rd, Hull, N. Humberside HU3 6UZ. ☎ 0482 508687 **H SC**

A & A C Stobbs (Computer Dept), 39/40 Upper Precinct, Blaydon-on-Tyne, Tyne & Wear NE21 5BT. ☎ 091 4143107 **HS SCA**

Stockton Software Ltd, 14 West Row, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS18 1BT. ☎ 0642 606166. **HS SCA**

Starsoft, 2c Walnut Road, Thorne, Doncaster, S. Yorks DN8 4HW. ☎ 0405 816970. **S SCA**

P.E.A.K. Electronics, 222 York Road, Hartlepool, Cleveland. **HS SCA**

Microtron, 9 Gillygate, Pontefract, W. Yorkshire. **HS SCA**

Microbyte Software Shop, 36 County Arcade, Leeds LS1 6BH, and 19a Lower Warrengate, Wakefield, W. Yorks. **S SCA**

MarCliff Computers, 43 Stockton Road, Sunderland SR1 3NR. ☎ Sunderland 78975. **HS SCA**

David Llewellyn, 24 Winchester Close, Great Lumley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham. **S S**

Ken Green (News & Computer Software), 26 Fowler St, South Shields, Tyne & Wear. **HS SCA**

Datamate Ltd, 2 Delaval Terr, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 1DL. ☎ 365846 **HS SCA**

Key: Suppliers of:
Hardware
Software
for
Amstrad
Commodore
Sinclair

The Computer Shop, 7 High Friars, Eldon Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7XG. ☎ 091 2616260. **HS SCA**

The Computer Shop, 224 High Street, Northallerton, N. Yorks DL7 8LU. **HS SCA**

C.H.I.P.S. Computer Shop, 151-153 Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AG. **HS SCA**

Virgin Games Centre, 94-96 The Briggate, Leeds LS1 6BR. ☎ 0532 432606.

Topsoft, Computer Software, 3 Hambletonian Yard, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland. **HS SCA**

East Anglia

Sudbury Micro Systems, 64 North Street, Sudbury, Suffolk. **HS SA**

Logic Sales Ltd, 6 Midgate, Peterborough PE1 1TN. ☎ 0733 49696. **HS SCA**

Micro Phone, 14 Plowright Place, Swaffham, Norfolk, and Aldiss Furnishing Centre, Norwich Rd, Fakenham, Norfolk. **HS SCA**

Viking Computers, Ardney Rise, Norwich, Norfolk. **HS SCA**

Wales

Camelot Software, Cae Ymryson, Caernarvon, Gwynedd LL55 2LR. **S S**

Cwmbran Computer Centre, 3/4 Ventnor Road, Old Cwmbran, Gwent. **HS SCA**

R. M. Ehrenzeller, Sounds Good, 1 Middleton Street, Llandrindod Wells, Powys. **S SCA**

J.C.G. Software, 23 The Courtyard, Riverside Market, Haverfordwest, Dyfed. ☎ 0437 2543. **HS SCA**

Merthyr Computer Centre, 110 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan. ☎ 0685 82230. **HS SCA**

Scotland

James Clark, 6 Bridge Street, Dunfermline, Fife. **S SCA**

The Computer Depot, 205 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2JZ. ☎ 041-332 3944. **HS SCA**

Inverness Computer Centre, 5 Mealmarket Close, Inverness IV1 1HT. ☎ 226205. **HS SCA**

The Micro Shop, 257 Dumbarton Road, Partick, Glasgow G11 6AB. ☎ 041-334 6163. **HS SC**

Mobile Micros (Marketing) Ltd, 1 East Back Street, Bishopmill, Elgin, Moray. **HS SCA**

Soft Centre, 2 Bruntsfield Place, Edinburgh EH10 4HN. **S SCA**

Software Connection, Argyle Centre Market, Argyle Centre, Glasgow G2 8AU. **S SCA**

Vics, Independent Computer Supplies, 31/33 South Street, Perth PH2 8PD. ☎0738 36704. **HS SCA**

Virgin Games Centre, 172 Union Street, Aberdeen AB1 1QT. ☎ 0224 645851

Virgin Games Centre, 28-32 Union Street, Glasgow G1 3QX. ☎ 041-204 0866.

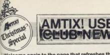
Ireland

Charly's Computer Corner, Clareabbey, Clarecastle, Co. Clare. ☎ 065/20806. **S SCA**

Darryn Reid, Leisure World, Romanos Building, 6 Queen Street, Belfast, N. Ireland. **HS SCA**

Abroad

Computer Studio, Kosančičev Venac 1a, 11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia. **S SCA**



Welcome again to the page that refreshes the parts of user clubs other magazines can't seem to reach. First of all can I be one of the first to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year (it saves having to send cards!) As I have said in the past the user club page is here to offer advice and help to newly formed, established, or planned organisations, and allows clubs to generally sound off about anything and everything.

AMTIX! wants to hear from user clubs the length and breadth of Britain. Indeed we welcome correspondence from organisations abroad as well. All you have to do is write a brief outline of your club's history and post the details to me. If you have any black and white pictures taken during a club meeting why not send them in. If they are good enough we will publish them. Got the idea? Good, then why are you waiting? Send in your articles and black and white pictures of club members, gatherings, etc, to me right now. The address, as always, is *Malcolm Harding, AMTIX! User Club Page, P O Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

This issue sees the continuation of the regular user club directory. If you want to be included in this free service send in details post haste. Once again I am publishing more pen pal listings but there is always room for lots more so write in if you are interested.

By Malcolm Harding

NEWS FROM SOLENT AMSTRAD CLUB

I know for a fact that there are more than a few people out there who tend to think the User Club feature is a waste of time. I'm a great believer in free expression but for once I intend to gloat, thanks to a letter from Bill Kent, chairman of the Solent Amstrad Club, way down south in Southampton.

In it he informs me the publicity given to the club in Issue 11 resulted in his telephone ringing all hours and indeed their next meeting, in October, was packed solid with lots of new faces. Consequently full membership has shot up to 33 with several more people seriously interested in joining shortly.

Bill also informed me they were hoping to have 'hands on' experience with the PC1512, thanks to a local supplier from Shirley, *Chip-Bits*, offering the loan of one. The club now has its catalogue of Public Domain Software on disk and are in the process of ordering different volumes which should be of interest to members. Any member wanting to see a specific volume can always ask the club librarian to purchase it for a fee of £1.50, this cost being a fee to the Public Domain User group and a small charge for the time taken for transferring the volumes to 3 inch disks, the software itself being free of charge.

Even though the club's membership has increased substantially Bill would welcome anyone else interested in joining. All they have to do is ring him on Southampton 558075 for further details.

THE CP/M USERS GROUP

The CP/M Users Group (UK) produces a number of excellent journals each year, and has a massive library of software which has been un-copyrighted by its authors, that is put in the "Public Domain". The Users Group will send you one volume for a £2 copying charge. The library includes BASIC, Pascal and C compilers, and Wordstar-type text editors. For more details write to:-

Diana Fordred, 72 Mill Road, Hawley, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7RZ.

CONTACT CALLING

Conrad Hart, the editor of Contact magazine, which he helps produce from Room 14, 48 Dover Road, Wanstead, London E12 5EA, has written to me again with more information about his organisation.

Apparently he has had to increase the membership fee to £3. For this sum you will receive regular copies of the magazine, a free blank cassette, posters and demo programs. Sounds good value. Anyone interested should write direct to Conrad.

A USER CLUB FOR BRUM

I have received a letter from John B Woods of 54 Lockwood Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31 1QD, who informs me he is in the process of forming a User Club for Birmingham. Anyone interested should drop him a line. John says he hopes to organise it so members have access to e local university which uses 6128s. If you are interested drop him a line.

USER CLUB INFORMATION

Finally I have received a letter from K Jackson of 24 Borras Avenue, Annitsford, Cramlington NE23 7QX, who want5s to join a user club but does not know of any. Well K Jackson if you read on you will find a mega list of user clubs. Just take your pick!

PEN PALS WANTED

More and more readers want pen pals who are computer minded including the following:-

Martin Fagan of 10 Woodford Avenue, Monastry Road, Clondaltin, Dublin 22, Eire, wants to hear from any other Amstrad owners interested in swopping games, pokes and general information. He is 16 years old and owns a CPC464.

David McKeever of Hillhead, Tarbolton, Mauchline, Ayrshire, Scotland, who wants to hear from anyone with a Disc Wizard and owns a CPC6128.

Tony Gibbons of 136 Cameron Estate, Reheny, Dublin 5, Eire, who wants to hear from anyone anywhere. His interests are arcade games and programming in basic.

Chris Burton, aged 15, of Caretakers House, Whitstable C J School, Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1DO, would like to hear from anyone aged between 14 years and 17 years. He owns a CPC464 and has about 50 games.

Jason Stanway, aged 16, of 26 Newpool Road, Knypersley, Biddulph, Stone on Trent ST8 6NS, would like to swop software, hints, and tips on the Amstrad and general information with anyone.

Colin Naylor, aged 15, of Priory Club Flat, 410 Marton Road, Middlesborough TS4 2PQ, owns a CPC464 with green screen and has loads of software. He wants to hear from any girls aged between 14 and 18 living in the United Kingdom. He would also like to hear from any user club in Middlesborough.

Simon Field, aged 14, of 7 Rosafield Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9BU, would like to hear from other CPC6128 owners who are interested in swopping tape or disk games and ideas. He also wants to know if there is a user club in Birmingham.

Michael Mellin, aged 14, of 4 Camden Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0BL, owns an Amstrad CPC464 and would like to hear from any boy or girl.

Peter Cheong, aged 15, of Apartment BLK 252, Ang Mo K10, Avenue 4, 03-211, Singapore 2056, is interested in programming, swopping games, and solving adventure games. He likes both adventure and arcade games and would like to hear from anyone anywhere!

Jon Tyler, aged 16, of 26 Kensington Avenue, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8BY, is interested in swopping tape games. He wants to hear from any CPC464 owners who are prepared to swop information and ideas.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns, aged 16, of 1 Langley Hill Close, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 9HB, wants to hear from other Amstrad owners interested in swopping such things as lists, tips and pokes.

Hayden Mallen, aged 13, who owns a CPC464, and lives at 80 Richmond Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 7RP. He wants to hear from girls or boys aged 13 to 14.

Alfred Hughes, aged 18, of 21 Guisborough Road, Thornaby, Cleveland TS17 8EE, wants to hear from other owners of CPC464 machines.

William Freeland, aged 16, of 15 John Humble Street, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 5QZ, would like a French pen pal who can write English.

Paul Boyall, aged 16, of 12 Main Road, Hundleby, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5LS, would like to hear from boys or girls of his age who own an Amstrad.

Eamon Murray, aged 16, of 169 Cappaghmore, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Eire, owns a CPC464 is interested in all software and would like to swop software, information, pokes etc.

Simon Martinez of 2 Vronhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool L8 8LB, also owns a 464 micro. He likes adventures and arcade games and is interested in helping others with tips and pokes, and also receiving same.

Jonathan Boyd, aged 14, of 18 Rydal Street, Frizington, Cumbria CA26 3PY, is 14 years old and owns a CPC6128. He would like to hear from anyone.

Anthony of 30 Rathvale Avenue, Ayrfield, Dublin 13, Eire, forgot to include his surname. He wants pen pals from anywhere, owns a CPC464, and is interested in programming and playing games. He would like the chance to swop ideas, tips etc. His phone number is 476458.

Robert Shepherd lives at 4 Trusthorpe Road, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincs Ln12 2LT, would like to hear from anyone — from punks to Prime Ministers!

Simon Davey, aged 18, of 22 Selkirk Street, Chaddesden, Derby DE2 6GL, is interested in contacting other CPC464 owners. They can be any age, and from any country as long as they write in English! He says he has loads of games to swop, and loads of maps to give away. He also has two adventures he has written himself with the Quill.

David McKeeves describes himself as a Multi Face Two owner. He lives at Hillhead, Tarbolton, Mauchline, Ayrshire KA5 5NT, and would like to swop games and tips.

Andrew Lawton, aged 21, of 3 Bridgeway East, Pentre Maelor, Wrexham, Clwyd LL13 9RB, would like to write to anyone of a similar age (plus or minus one year), either in the United Kingdom or abroad. He is interested in learning to hack progs and would welcome correspondence from anyone proficient in this 'art'. He has a CPC464 and DDI and likes most types of games.

Sergio Trigo Vasques, aged 16, owns a CPC6128, and lives at Rua General Silva Freire 151-4D, 1800 Lisbon, Portugal. He says there is little support for the Amstrad in his country and he would like to write to anyone, anywhere.

Michael Aldridge aged 16, of 105 Catherton, Stirchley, Telford TF3 1VX, owns a CPC464 and would like to hear from anyone else with a similar micro.

Finally **Mike** of 68 Silver Street, Wythall, Worcs B47 6LZ, forgot to include his surname but wants to hear from lots of people.

NEWS FROM ADVANTAGE

My friend Jeffrey Green for Advantage tells me the club is pleased to announce a collection of four classic adventure games from **NEMESIS** on one disk, specially adapted for the PCW computer. The four games are:— *THE TRIAL OF ARNOLD BLACKWOOD, ARNOLD GOES TO SOMEWHERE ELSE, THE WISE AND FOOL OF ARNOLD BLACKWOOD*, and *BRAWN FREE*. The disk also includes Hints and Tips and, if you need it, 'Cheat Sheets' on each game. The price is £15.95. The disk described above can also be supplied for CPC computers at a price of £13.95.

Also available from Mr Green is *ADVANTAGE C*, a professional product for PCW and expanded CPC computers, at an affordable price. It features full Kernighan-Ritchie implementation, supports floats, doubles, bit fields, structures and unions; is Unix C compatible, has 150 library functions, Optimisation tools, is suitable for experienced programmers and suitable for beginners. A step-by-step tutorial is included. The compiler, programs and manual are written by MIX Software, of Texas, USA. The package includes a 450 page, A4 size book describing the operation of the compiler, C programming and tutorial. The compiler runs under CP/M Plus and is supplied on three inch disk — a second disk drive or RAM disk is recommended for CPC users. It costs £39.50. An MSDOS version of this software is also available for the PC1512.

Anyone interested in these products should write to Advantage, 33 Malyns Close, Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX9 4EW.

AMSTRAD USER GROUP (NORFOLK)

User clubs are sprouting up all over the country. I have recently heard from the Amstrad User Group (Norfolk) who are based at 38 Goose Lane, Sutton, Stalham, Norfolk NR12 9SE. Their president has a signature which defies recognition but he tells me the members are ordinary people from all walks of life who have keyboards attached to their fingers.

Anyone interested in joining the club should send a stamped addressed envelope to the aforementioned address.

LOOKING FOR A CLUB

AMTIX! reader, K Jackson, who lives at 24 Barras Avenue, Annitsford, Cramlington NE23 7QX, is looking for a user club in his area. Anyone out there able to help him?

USER CLUB DIRECTORY

The first thing I shall do is apologise in case any of the club names and addresses are duplicated. There are a lot of them but I would welcome any more to add to the directory. Remember it will be published in every issue of AMTIX! Right here we go.

Donald Leith, AusAmsNet 534 Albion Street, West Brunswick, Victoria 3055, Australia

Ms Christine Linfoot AMSTRAD CANTERBURY P O Box 23.079 Templeton, Christchurch, New Zealand

Ms Debbie Hoffman SOUTHSIDE AMSTRAD USERS CLUB, P O Box 324, Gosnells 6110, Western Australia

Eddie Goh Cheng SINGAPORE AMSTRAD USERS CLUB B1K 216 Jurong, East Street, 21 04-523, SINGAPORE 2260

COMMUNITY COMPUTING, Church of Ascension, Hulme Walk, Hulme, Manchester M15 5FQ

Mrs P T Ardron, AMSWEST AMSTRAD USER GROUP 6 Weston Street, Carlisle 6101, West Australia

M Christophe Waroux, Le CLUB INFOMATIQUE BRUYSLEN LE CIB, 1 Rue Laterale 62470, Calonne Ricourart, Siege Social Bruay-en-Artois, France

P Paton, PATONS COMPUTER SERVICES, 176 Todmorden Road, Burnley, Lancashire BB11 3EU

Simon Porritt, AMSTRAD USER SOFTWARE DATABASE 13 Woodbine Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 4EU

Mr M J Dyos, ELLESMERE AMSTRAD USERS CLUB Ellesmere Port, South Wirral

Mr J Green, ADVANTAGE COMPUTER USER GROUP, 33 Malyns Close, Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX9 4EW

Mr J S Bone, ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTER CLUBS, Club Spot 810 c/o Claremont Place, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

Mr R Mobberley, PCW USERS GROUP 37 Clifford Bridge Road, Binley, Coventry CV3 2DW

Mr Stuart Williams, WEST MIDLANDS AMSTRAD USER GROUP 26 Matlock Road, Lower Farm Estate, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3QD

Mr Dave Chambers, BURNLEY CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, 62 Moorland Road, Rosehill, Lancashire BB11 2NX

Mr Derek Vernon, THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT AMSTRAD USER CLUB 1 The Middle Way, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7E

Mr A Toghill, TAFFS WELL CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB 45 Moy Road, Taffs Well, South Glamorgan

LONDON AMSTRAD USER CLUB Harrow Computer Group, Harrow Arts Centre, 356 High Road, Harrow Weald

Mr P Chick, CROYDON MICROCOMPUTER CLUB, Central Reference Library, Catherine Street, Croydon

Mr D Wilkinson, SUTTON LIBRARY COMPUTER CLUB Central Library, St Nicholas Way, Sutton

Mr D Pettet, NORTH KENT AMATEUR COMPUTER CLUB, Charles Darwin School, Jail Lane, Biggin Hill

Mr B Forster, RICHMOND COMPUTER CLUB Richmond Adult College, Parkshot House, Richmond

Mr M Tew, THANET CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, 21 Wallis Gardens, Westbrook, Margate, Kent CT9 5RG

Mr D Powell, HUDDERSFIELD CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, 35 Foxroyed Drive, Mirfield, Huddersfield

COTAC CLUB The Secretary, Mr Conrad Hart 48 Dover Road, Room 14, Wanstead, London E12 5EA

AMSTRAD GROUPS FEDERATION, The Secretary, Mr P Clarke 4 Sutton Road, Gorton, Manchester M18 7PN. Tel 061-256-2679

ROCKINGHAM-KWINANA AMSTRAD COMPUTER CLUB, The Secretary, Mr K Saw 29 Millgrove Avenue, Cooloongup, Western Australia WA 6168

AMSTRAD COMPUTER CLUB inc (SA), The President, Mr C Sowden, P O Box 210, Parkholme 5043, South Australia

VICTORIA WESTERN COMPUTER CLUB, The Secretary, P O Box 42, Braybrook 3019, Western Australia

EASTERN AMSTRAD USER GROUP, The Secretary, Barry Fredrickson, P O Box 279, Heidelberg Vic 3084, Australia

WAGGA WAGGA AMSTRAD USER GROUP, The Secretary, Mr J D Tipper 36 Wills Place, Kapooka, NSW 2661, Australia

PORT MACQUARIE AMSTRAD USERS GROUP The Secretary, Craig Tollis P O Box 584, Port Macquarie 2444, Australia

Schneider-JOYCE-Anwenderkreis, Munster/Coesfeld sucht Mitglieder Contact: **Wolfgang Kurch** 4405 Nottuln Tel: 0 25 02/1540 Germany

CPC USER CLUB - Grundung, Contact: Sven Martin Obstreubenstrasse 3 3590, Bad Wildungen, Germany

ROMSOFT CPC CLUB, Michael George Waldstrasse 13 6630 Saarlouis 5 Tel: 0 6831 6701 Germany

AMSTRAD CLUB SCHWEIZ Kurt In-Albon Muhlackern CH-3931 Eggerberg Switzerland

FREAK-SOFT-CLUB CPC 464: Ralf Hopperdietzel Theodor-Storm-Strasse 22 8670 Hof (Saale) Germany

FREAK-SOFT-CLUB CPC 664, CPC 6128, Michael Eckert Zobelsreuther Strasse 30 8670 (Saale) Germany

CLUBRUNDUNG im Raum Hanau-Gelnhausen, Richard Luppert Gartenstrasse 18, 6456 Langenselbold, Germany

SCHNEIDER-JOYCE USER CLUB RHEIN-MAIN A-Reichweinweg 6 6097, Trebur 3, Germany

CPC CLUB BORKEN, Karsten Kammier Heinrich-Hertz-Strasse 4 4280 Borken-Gemen Germany

6128-und 664- Besitzer, Michael Decker Im Richelnberg 36 5166 Kreuzau, Germany

CPC USER CLUB LAATZEN, Contact: Rolf Menn Am Kamp 29 3014 Laatzen 1, Germany

S C C N-H-W-N-H-W Schneider Computer Club, Oliver Thiele Am Kirchweg 49, 5908 Neunkirchen 5, Germany

S C C H Schneider Computer Club Hamburg, Alexander Scharf Heimfelder Strasse 60, 2100 Hamburg 90, Germany

CPC-USER-CLUB Schweiz, Klaus-Dieter Preiss Im Hof 20 CH-8637, Laupen, Switzerland

JOYCE COMPUTER CLUB, Micolai Walter Postfach 1269 6242 Kronberg/Ts, Germany

INTER-MEDIA-CLUB SCHWEIZ IMC, Schneider CPC-CLUB, Urs Thony Pasch CH-7214, Grusch, Switzerland

CPC-USER-CLUB- VOGELSANG, Peter Wiescher Kasernenstrasse 9, D-5140 Erkelenz-4, Germany

CPC 464 CLUB GRUNDUNG, Contact Heinz Elbers Wurttemberger Strasse 1 4460 Nordhorn Germany

SCHNEIDER CPC CLUB Bayreuth und Bayreuther Computers Club, Marco Konard Fontanestrasse 4, 8580 Bayreuth, Germany

CPC CLUB GRUNDUNG ANGESTREBT, Markus Jost Amorbacker Strasse 52, 6090 Russelsheim/Konigstadten, Germany

SCHNEIDER CPC-CLUB JOYCE USER CLUB, Friedhelm Schurmann Schaferstrasse 21a 4708 Kamen Germany

USER CLUB IN DER SCHWEIZ! 464 Grundung! Christian Strebel Ruslerstrasse 3, CH-5452 O'rohrdorf, Switzerland

JOYCE USER CLUB Clubgrundung Geplant, Heinz Haupt 4300 Essen 1 Fridtjof-Nansen-Strasse 1 Germany

SCHNEIDER COMPUTER CLUB e v Abt. ostwestfalen/Lippe Postfack 1101 4972 lohne 1, Germany

AMSTRAD SCHNEIDER USER CLUB Aachen A S U C A Mitglieder auf Dipl-Ing R.Cloots Zeibstrasse 7 5132 Ubach-Palenberg Germany

WESTERN SUBURBD AMSTRAD, The Secretary, Mr J James 36 Penong Street, Westlake, Brisbane 4074, Australia

WEIPA AMSTRAD USERS GROUP, The Secretary, Mr Gary Chippendale 15 Noola Court, Weipa 4874, Australia

CPC NUTZER CLUB, Contact, Fritz-Peter Nonnenbruch Splittenbrede 11 4800 Bielefeld 1 Tel: 05 21 88 7970

NORDHORN 'USER CLUB, Contact, Fred Weber Laarstrabe 23 4460 Nordhorn. Tel: 059 21 75478

CPC CLUB MAGIC KEY, Contact, Michael Hollman Stamburger Strabe 46 2800, Bremen 1

BERLINER USER CLUB, Contact, Wolfgang Windorpski Gritznerstrabe 38 1000, Berlin 41 Tel: 030 822 7750

CPC CLUB GUNDUNG, Contact, Kries Borken Dominique Weib Sudring 6 4282 Veolen-Ramsdorf

SCHNEIDER USER CLUB Heilbronn, Contact, Mirka Pecoroni Deutschherrenstabe 6 7107 Bad Friedrichshall; Tel: 071 36 6701

JOYCE USER CLUB NURNBERG, Ansgar Zerfab Ammanstrabe 26 8500 Nurnberg 40 Tel: 09 11 4367 78

JOYCE USER CLUB Neugrundung, Contact, Arthur Borens

West Midlands Amstrad User Group 26 Matlock Road, Lower Farm Estate, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 3QD, West Midlands. Contact **Stuart Williams** on 0922 406411

AUSD (Amstrad User Software Database) P O Box 11, Gosforth, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 1RP

Amstrad Computing Newsletter Christopher Bryant, 11 Havenview Road, Seaton, Devon EX12 2PF. Telephone 0297 20456

Amstrad North West User's Club 41 Millwall Close, Gorton, Manchester M18 8LL. Contact **Clint Heyliger** Telephone 061-256-2679

Advantage User Group 33 Malyn's Close, Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX9 4EW. Contact **Jeffrey Green**

National Independent User Club, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex

Southside Amstrad Users Club, P O Box 324, Gosnells 6110, Western Australia. Contact **Debbie Hoffman** Telephone 09-4598702

Solent Amstrad Club c/o 1 Dimond Close, Bitterne Park, Southampton SO2 4LF. Telephone Southampton 558075 after 5pm. Contact **Bill Kent**

Brighton, Hove and District Computer Club, 19 Beach Green, Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex BN4 5YG. Telephone 0273 463111. Contact **George Sears**

Camelclub Wellpark, Willeys Avenue, Exeter. Telephone 0392 21189. Contact **John Keneally**

Contact, Room 14, 48 Dover Road, Wanstead, London E12 5EA Telephone 01 989 2503. Contact **Conrad Hart**

The AMTIX! Flashback!

In which RICHARD EDDY and MALCOLM HARDING reminisce over the past year's events in the Amstrad world.

1986, in the team's opinion, probably saw the 'birth' of the Amstrad in the eyes of the General Public. Over the year the machine has come in for a great deal of stick, from both the users and the software companies. Like Amstrad itself, AMTIX! has undergone many changes since this time last year, mainly due to the fact that the original team have gone on to other projects. So, it's about time we reminisced over the past year, taking a look at the faces, the software, and the news that enabled Amstrad to establish itself as one of the major companies on the computer market.

So what has become of that ageing team that helped to set up AMTIX! in those early days? When it was founded AMTIX! had two co-editors; Roger Kean and Jeremy Spencer. Roger has now moved over to LM and as for Jem, well, he's gone on to to play Ed to a business publication. Sean, dearly remembered since he abandoned us last month, has not been seen since, but as soon as we get a postcard we'll let you know. Ex Tipster, Robin Candy, has gone on to further education, changed his hair style and colour several times, and can still be spotted hanging out at the notorious haunts of Ludlow. The porcine one, Gary Liddon, has gone on to help set up Thalamus — who still haven't produced an Amstrad game — and Ex Tipster Mk II Rignall is purely a ZZAP! man now. They were the faces of early '86, the new ones will be introduced in time. Now let's go through the year, cover issue by cover issue.

JANUARY

Still under the watchful eye of Messieurs Kean and Spencer the first Accolade of the New Year was announced, *Cauldron* from the infinitely strange guys at **Palace** — it was their style which made people realise that the Amstrad could be put to original use, with great graphic capabilities — that was but a beginning — little did we suspect what was to come later. Also on the mega soft front was the legendary *Yie Ar Kung Fu* which, nearly a year later, still rides high in the popularity charts. **Virgin** made a reappearance into the software world after their amazing *Sorcery Plus* with *Strangeloop* a, well er um, strange game that didn't exactly take off in vast proportions.

A rare appearance of Auntie Aggie was made in the form of the Aggie Christmas Comp., where she announced the arrival of six modems that were scurrying around her office — she's never written a comp since and that particular comp is best left forgotten . . .

Rainbird Software unveiled plans to release *The Music System* and the *Advanced Music System* for the Arnold. Gary Liddon, now into BIGGER things! took apart a *Toolkit ROM* from **Utopia** and we looked at a drawing utility called *Draughtsman* from **Computer Graphics**.



FEBRUARY

The company that was on everyone's lips, **Ultimate**, released the long awaited *Nightshade* — which marked the beginning of their filmation II process, which carried on from where *Knightlore* and *Alien 8* had left off. Hopping on to the **Ultimate** bandwagon was **Gargoyle** with their spoof 3D game, *Sweevo's World*, which had us all giggling here in the Towers — it just seems strange that after nearly a year nothing more has been heard of the **Gargoyle** Just-For-Fun label, let alone the ugly love himself, good old Sweevo.

The so-called 'Game of a lifetime', *Elite*, arrived and was promptly awarded an Accolade - being hailed by the mutant revellers as an 'all time classic'. Unfortunately we discovered a few weeks later that there was a horrendous bug in every copy that was on sale. Most people, much to their annoyance, had to wait a good six months to see a final completed version and even longer for the expanded(-ish) disk version. **Infocom**, the masters of the adventure game, certainly came up with the goods, Sean started with *Zork 1,2*and 3 with *Deadline* for his main course and the magnificent *Hitch-hiker's Guide To The Galaxy* to follow. Although none of them had specific ratings they were all worthy of an Accolade then, as they are today. Flop of the Month went to **Electric Dreams** for their first offering on the Amstrad — *Winter Sports* — little did anyone know that in future months they were to come up with such games as *Spindizzy* and *Tempest*.

Amtech took a look at the latest printer from Amstrad, namely the DMP2000.

MARCH

March saw the arrival of the first scary monster (Bwah!) on the cover, bringing in a host of complaints from scared and disgruntled readers. But the green fleshy personna was nothing compared to the hideous arrival of the first member of the new team, our eminent and worthy leader to this very day, it's . . . Crumbly. So, the famous eyebrows greeted the humble public, and what better way to start an editorial career, but by making apologies for the missing accolade stickers from *Elite* and *Swevo's World* in the previous month. Not his fault, of course! There was no hesitation over what was the big smash hit of the month, *Spindizzy* was here at last — making up for **Electric Dream**'s temporary abberation with *Winter Sports*. *Spindizzy* grabbed 98% overall, the highest mark an Amstrad game has ever had. The game left us all feeling jolly happy and secure in the knowledge that the Amstrad had a great future ahead of it.

Another Accolade went to **Mastertronic**'s *Spellbound*, the first game to use David Jones' amazing windowmation sequence. This made another statement — proving that budget games could be good and didn't have to be regarded with trepidation. The long awaited *Hypersports* from **Imagine** arrived much to the then reviewers' disgust — calling it 'Poor sprites, feeble animation, wobbly and slow scrolling . . . very disappointing . . . Too many niggles to make it fun.' Obviously **Imagine** didn't get the name of the game they were hoping for.

Crumbly opened up his briefcase for the first time and started the User Club regular feature. Roy CPM Jones continued his examination of Public Domain and there were details about *Laser Basic*, the **Vortex** expansion board and the improved *AMX Mouse*.

During the end of the month the Amstrad Computer Show enjoyed a week-end of Manchester hospitality. Funny, it hasn't been outside the capital since then!

APRIL

And so big Jeremy left us for pastures new (a term well used here at the Towers), and Malcolm was all on his own now that Roger had scampered off back to ZZAP! Still he's a very resilient Crumbly and he's still with us! As a goodbye tribute Roger was allowed to take over OTS for the month (pre-Saffron days y'know). Number one Accolade of the month was *Tau Ceti*, still regarded highly for its novel approach to interactive science fiction. April saw the announcement of the readers awards for 1985, and as predicted *Sorcery* took the biscuit, dragging in the Best Game Overall, Best Arcade Adventure, Best graphics, Best Sound FX and State Of The Art Award. To everyone's surprise *Hypersports* received Best Sports Simulation, after having been slagged off the month before.

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

Also on the software front, Robin took an artistic leaning towards *Melbourne Draw*, already very keen on Computer Art he said 'how much more pleasing it was on the Amstrad'. Previewed that month was *Eidolon*, tried and tested by the two Garys — Penn and Liddon — little did they suspect that we wouldn't see the finished version until last month.

On the Amtech front we reviewed *Music Teacher* from **Childsplay Software** and *Mini Office 11* from **Database Software**.

MAY

May saw another great 'n' gory cover and although it didn't have any particular relevence to any game, Oli did enjoy doing it all the same. Four articulate accolades romped in for the mag, including the first arrival from over the channel — France's *Grafton and Xunk*, in the shape of *Get Dexter*. More fun from over the water appears this month in the shape of*MGT*from **Loriciels** — do them frogs never stop coming up with great games?

May saw the final appearance of (sob, sob) Tipster Robin Candy as he bashed out, with a tear in his eye, his final message of sadness on leaving. Never mind, Pouting prima donna Rignall came to the rescue to take over and everything was well 'n' good. **Gremlin Graphics**, more renowned for their *Monty* fame, came up with a neat variant of their successful 64 game, *Thing On A Spring* which had everyone bopping round in the office for days after.(Doo do dooby do, do do dibby dibby . . . do bo da do bo da da da .. Ieeeeeoooowwwww!)

Guest writer, Jim Ollerhead, offered advice about curing cassette problems and Crumbly became a year older! What a shame!



THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

JUNE

For some reason June appears to bring everyone out in arcade adventures with both *Batman* and *MOVIE* taking Accolades home to the **Ocean/Imagine** cottage in Brum. Accolade numero uno went to **Martech** for their excellent arcade strategy *Zoids*, based on those plastic monsterbots which still roam the AMTIX! office to this very day. Ungorgeous, unpouting, Sam Fox made her first, and hopefully last, ''nude'' appearance in our esteemed organ, this was also courtesy of **Martech** (David Martin's got a lot to answer for!) We don't think Malcolm's ever been the same since. From pornography to *Prospell*, not for any particular reason but it makes a good link into prima donna Rignall whose six month tip run begun with his telling everyone how he was getting GBH from Pat 'N' Doreen (the gorgeous pouting mail sorters). What a wimp

Cover Picture *Redhawk* drew **Melbourne House**'s first Accolade in the adventure market. Sean also handed out Accolades to **Lothlorien** for their *Waterloo* strategy game and to **Firebird** for *Runestone* — the first landscaping adventure game. Yes, it certainly was a mega edition for Accolades with **Gremlin Graphics** drawing in their next two for *Way of the Tiger* (later called, Way Of The Pointy Stick), and their wacky ball game, *Bounder*. French connections came from **PSS** and **ERE** in the shape of *Doomsday Blues*, again a game that heavily relied on its unusual, but innovative, gameplay which unfortunately was somewhat overshadowed by *Get Dexter*.

Contributor, Jon Bates, reviewed *Music Minstrel* from **Kuma** and William Jones took an in depth look at a spelling checker called *Prospell* from **Arnor**.

JULY

The heat, or rather the lack of it, of summer obviously sparks programmers into producing some quality games as demonstrated by the six accolades on offer in July. Two of them, *Starquake* and *Monty On The Run*, have both made recent re-appearances on our Accolade collection tape, produced by **Gremlin Graphics** — both received rave reviews then as they would now. Another French offering from **Loricielss** this time, *The 5th Axis* took an accolade back to the home of garlic and snails — looking back they have done well this year! Near miss of the century has obviously got to go to **EPYX**'s *Winter Games* which really should have been an Accolade — so why wasn't it? We shall never know . . .

Ultimate missed their first Accolade with *Gunfright* but nevertheless, it was a fun game and obviously amused many a punter. On the Technical front AMTIX! tech supremo Simon (Raspythroat) Goodwin came up with a unique solution on how to turn your communal garden Joyce into big 'n' fat one for a measly twenty quid; hopefully nothing went wrong . . .

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

AUGUST

And so, six months after *Cauldron*, the boys from the **Palace** brought us *Cauldron II* — the Pumpkin Strikes Back, reaping in an Accolade. Other games of the month included the all singing, all dancing, all drinking *Harvey Headbanger* a great little game. Although very simple, it provided us all with a laugh — it also got **Firebird** another Accolade to add to their ever growing collection (To match their growing collection of Porsches). El Retardo got his first piccy in the mag, much to his disapproval but much to our amusement. Budget games had their own supplement, although none were particularly magnificent apart from **Mastertronic**'s *Molecule Man* which managed an overall 82%. **Odin** had their first Accolade to celebrate their first release of *Nodes Of Yesod*, which followed the adventures of Charlie Fotheringham-Grunes in his moon romp.

Contributor, Paul Sherreard, our jolly London connection person, reviewed a tape to disk transfer utility from **Nemesis** called the *Bonzo Meddler*. Anthony Clarke arrived with his hardware scroll..And so ended the old AMTIX!

SEPTEMBER

And then there was us, the new AMTIX! — a whole lot more jolly and exciting. Hot stuff in September came from three very different Accolades. David Jones had his second Accolade with *Knight Tyme*, and although not praised highly by Lee and Anthony, it proved a firm hit with Richard as he trundled Magic Knight into the early hours of the morning determined to complete it, he never did. Anything that compulsive surely deserves an Accolade, popular one too!

From the unfamiliar company **Micropool** came a German release, *Mission Elevator*, which proved a firm favourite with Rich and Mass (Sub-Editor then) and maybe it should have had higher ratings. Gaff of the month went to the Art dept for their mistake of putting *Buster Block* on the same page as *Goldrun* when really *Blockbusters* should have been there. The long awaited 'Mega game' from **Alligata**, *Meltdown*, arrived and didn't cause quite as big a stir as expected. The review was somewhat 'tepid' to say the least and as far as we can remember the game hasn't been played since the review. *Knight Games*, on the other hand, while receiving a similar review to *Meltdown*, has been dug out many a time for a smash-em-up. The Joyce scene looked as if it was picking up, especially on the games front, and so we produced a special round-up of the games and utilities that were on offer. As expected *Batman* came out on top, getting 92% overall (Where was the Accolade sticker?) and certain members of the team can still be found playing it on their Joyce instead of writing reviews like they should be . . . Tut Tut.
Delta Four, who had already earned a suitable reputation for their superb *Bored Of The Rings* and *Robin Of Sherlock*, managed to drag an Accolade back to **Swanmore** for their latest classic spoof adventure, *The Boggit*, suitably subtitled 'Bored Too'. Hummmm. Also on the adventure front was a strange little, er, game aptly dubbed *The Experience*. It won acclaim, not so much for the fact that it was a good adventure, but purely for the hilarious, and often crude, responses that the inputs gave. The best experience for the likes of Richard and Lee in September was the arrival of **Electric Dreams** latest blockbuster *Tempest* — a game that is constantly played with the sound amplifier on full blast — great stuff! **Gremlin Graphics** got themselves yet another Accolade for *Jack The Nipper* which Lee absolutely raved about but I'm not so sure that it had the addictiveness that it claimed to have.

Amtech went mad with reviews of a host of goodies including *Utopia*, a programmer's toolkit from **Arnor**, a Silicon Disk in place of a second disk drive, the *Drumkit* from **Cheetah**, and the Mk11 Lightpen from **Electric Studio**.



OCTOBER

The brown Autumn leaves fell and with it came the original **Gargoyle** game, *Tir Na Nog* — the birth child of *Dun Darach* and *Marsport*. Sean was so well impressed with it that with one fair swoop on went an Accolade sticker. I must admit although I was never struck by the earlier versions of it, the Amstrad conversion seemed to have that little extra something — all jolly good stuff. The great Atari game, *Rescue on Fractalus*, was born again on the Amstrad courtesy of **Activision** and got another Accolade into the bargain. Another legend of the computer world also appeared — *Doomdark's Revenge*. Lee absolutely raved over while I was not so sure, but there it was; it appears to have proved popular. Disappointment of the month went to *Impossible Mission*, a very weak conversion of the 64 game which I still love to play — but it lacked the all important elements that made the original such a hit. From **PSS**, the French hit company, came a somewhat disappointing *Pacific*, all very pretty but very little actual game. Crumbly became the star of OTS for a month with his now famous eyebrows splattered all over the place. Quite a number of replies came through to Saffron in the following days sticking up for the cuddly crumbly one — particulary one Honey Basset who incidentially doesn't live all that far away from Malcy's home town. Teenage hero, Ricky Steel, burst into the limelight, and then disappeared shortly afterwards at the PCW show . . . Rumour has it that he will appear again!

Amtech Tony really got stuck into his work and looked at such goodies as a *Speech* utility from **Superior Software**, the *Mirager* from **Mirage Microcomputers**, and the *CBASIC Compiler* from **Digital Research**.

NOVEMBER

Issue 13 just had to be hit with some catastrophe or other; some 30 pages were originally booked for reviews but, unfortunately the summer slack caught up with us and the Software bucket had only the remnants of some 13 games — really quite a poor offering. Luckily there was a great deal happening during the month which meant there was a lot to tell you all about, so the magazine eventually didn't lose any pages (unlike some I could mention — but I won't). Despite the lack of software, three prestigious Accolades turned up in various guises. Mr Bouncy had a hit with *Revolution*, another quality game from **Vortex** who had already established themselves with such games as *Highway Encounter One* and *Highway Encounter Two*.

Dan Dare made a reasonable mark for a game such as it was. Mass loved it and made some astute comments on it; it was only then then we realised he was wasted on being a Sub, and he was bound and gagged and started writing reviews last issue. Brains came into play quite substantially when Dom and Mark, from **Domark**, brought up to Ludlow *Trivial Pursuits*. Although not originally intended to be an Accolade we soon changed our minds when we realised that we had been playing it nearly every day. The legend (Or should that be leg-end?) itself, *Knight Rider*, finally arrived, much to our disgust. That traitor, Lee Paddon, described it as 'The biggest pile of tosh it has been my displeasure to play' whereas Anthony went for his inevitable subtle approach, 'What a con!' In future when given the choice between having my appendix out or playing *Knight Rider* I think I shall choose the operation — at least then you get an anaesthetic.

The Joyce had its first proper Accolade with *Tomahawk* we remember being very impressed and maybe went over the top when we hailed it as 'The ultimate in arcade simulation' Nevertheless it was very good. I think mistake of the century must go to us for not making *Trap Door* an Accolade — it really was, and still is, superb. It earned the approval of us three and we think it's fair to say that if reviewed again the Accolade would be there. (Okay Mandy? Fine.)

DECEMBER

The run-up to Christmas began last month with seven prestigious Accolades, six to games and one to **Infocom**'s latest adventure, *Leather Goddesses Of Phobos*, which amazed Sean beyond belief, and was promtly awarded our coveted symbol. Probably the best of the best last month was *Eidolon* being hailed as 'the most innovative, compelling and exciting game ever created' — yes we liked it quite a bit. Mr Bouncy Ball returned, courtesy of Gremlin this time. It bounced in with *Trailblazer* adding yet another Accolade to their ever growing collection. Two legends turned up, the first one being *Scooby Doo*. Despite being a year late it was found to be outstandingly good. I think we must have raved over it a lot, Richard the most. All the practice paid off for him in the challenge this month — 38,700! Beat that Rignall! The other legend was *Streek Hawk*, a game that must have helped many a magazine to survive in advertising.

Although not really worth the wait, it wasn't all that bad. A company that had been keeping quiet for some time, **A 'n' F**, brought out the amazing sport of the future with *Xeno* (pronounced Zee-no — as in Beano) Panic causer of the month went to *Ikari Warriors* that arrived with Nigel from **Elite** only hours before our deadline. It caused havoc — what was usually the 'tidying up' period suddenly became last minute reviewing time. Well, there's no rest for the wicked. Predictably the terrible twosome voted the Accolade compilation tape an Accolade — well worth it for ten quid, where else could you get those games at £2.50 each?

The doors of the gallery opened with contributions from David Thorpe who bashed up Mr Tut, **CRL** for the gun and the American collage and *Dragon's Lair* from the **Software Projects** team. The actual game won't be unveiled until January, what a shame. Our old mates from **Gargoyle** launched their new label, **FTL**, with the fast action shoot 'em up, *Lightforce*. It would be nice to say that the year ended the way it began, but it didn't, so we won't.

1986 certainly brought the Amstrad up front, and us with it — stick with us and watch the Amstrad, and AMTIX!, rise through the heights. Until next year then . . . it's a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from him, and the same from me!

BEACH HEAD II

US Gold, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

The dateline is July 1947, and it's s sweltering summer. As a player you must select your allegiance — to the allies or towards the dastardly dictator. As an ally you will take the role of JP Stryker, the youngest ever man to reach the rank of tank commander. Having fought courageously during World War II he was awarded the Medal of Honour. Quickly working his way up through the ranks he earned the admiration of all his colleagues (what a hero). On the other hand if you don't want to be Mr Goody - Goody there's always the nasty and mean Dictator (Grrrrrr). The Dictator is billed as being the evil, bloodthirsty stereo-type of an enemy. Known to his comrades as The Dragon he earned himself a reputation somewhat akin to that of the Atom bomb. A brilliant military tactician who has been outnumbered many a time in battle but usually succeeds due to his strategies of turning the table on the opposition through cunning and ruthlessness.

Which side will you give your allegiance to? Whichever one you choose you will still be put through the same rigorous ordeals.

SEQUENCE ONE: The Attack

The scene is that of an open landscape with three rows of concrete walls. Nearest to you is the gun emplacement from where a rapid fire machine gun will issue a stream of bullets at the oncoming parachutists who have moments before descending on the plain. If you take the role of the allies you control the parachutists, guiding them behind the furthest wall, moving them forward and when close enough launching hand grenade attacks on the gun emplacement. You will also be in full control of the helicopter from where the parachutists descend. If you manoeuvre the helicopter too low then the parachutes will not have enough time to open and will kill them; too high and they might be shot at by the Dictator. In this sequence the Dictator has control over the gun emplacement and must try to illuminate the allied forces who are trying to storm his fortress. If you, as the Dictator, manage to wipe out all the allied forces, then it will be an out-and-out victory and the game will end.

SEQUENCE TWO: The Rescue

Allied forces have penetrated the sanctuary and are attempting to rescue the captives, currently being held hostage by the Dictator. They have taken control of the gun emplacement and quickly destroy any tanks that may attempt to launch an attack on the escaping captives. If you play the Dictator you take control of the soldier based on top of the wall. His objective is to attack the escaping captives. The escapees may also come in for attack from the tanks, trucks and men that appear from the trapdoors. The key to success is to keep the gun emplacement active, shooting everything in sight — except, of course, for the escaping captives!

SEQUENCE THREE: The Escape

Playing the Dictator in this part controls the course of the individual escape run and tanks that are located throughout the enemy terrain. The tank must be manoeuvred into such a position that it can destroy the helicopter — controlled by the allies. The allies must select the number of hostages to be carried in each helicopter. They have the ability to fire rockets and fly through the gaps in the wall, but not over them.

SEQUENCE FOUR: The Battle

Situated in a cave with a wide chasm separating the two sides you eventually come face to face with the Dictator, or Stryker — depending on whichever one you happen to be playing. The only weapons you have a sharp pointed sticks, known as Poontas. You must fling them at your opposition in an attempt to kill him. To actually kill the opposition he will have to be hit twenty times and then you can watch him plunge into the depths with a mighty scream.

Mass — CRITICISM

Oh, deary, deary me. Shame, shame, US Gold what have you released? I haven't seen a game of this standard for a long time — it's pathetic! The graphics are terrible, the sound FX are boring and the tune gets right up my nose. The playability is awful, it's either easy or extremely easy, no challenge what-so ever. There is absolutely nothing about this game I like and I wouldn't play it again if they paid me ten quid! FORGET IT!

Richard — CRITICISM

This really is a disgrace, how a company such as US Gold have the nerve to deliver this onto an unsuspecting public is beyond me. The detailed animation that was present on the 64 has been totally lost here, without all the neat effects such as the speech, and has made most unexciting to play. The collision detection is very poor as well — you have to precisely hit your opponent with the end of your stream of bullets, not exactly realistic is it? Generally, a poor product for which I wouldn't give the time of day.

PRESENTATION 67%
Well packaged, plenty of options.

GRAPHICS 25%
Poor, blocky and unimaginative.

SOUND 12%
My dog's bach is more tuneful.

PLAYABILITY 10%
Snigger, giggle, ha ha ha ha!

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 4%
As much fun as watching your car rust.

VALUE FOR MONEY 5%
A tenner is a bit steep for a tape that's better off blank.

OVERALL 10%
Pull your socks up US Gold.

Amtix Christmas Special

THEY STOLE A MILLION

39 Steps, £9.95 cass, joystick

The Boss, that's you, a small time crook with big ideas. You've had enough of the petty larceny lark and have decided to get into the big time. However you realise that you can not do this alone, but where can you find help? Your answer came whilst flicking through a copy of 'What Crime' magazine. Some bright spark took it upon himself to compile a massive data base system called SWAG (Software for Aspiring Gangsters) which contains lots of information on potential targets, available hoodlums and possible fences. So what was left to do but write off, give a stolen credit card number, and before you know it, you're sitting in front of your own computer ready to suss out the fist big job.

At the start of the game you are given 55 G's (£55,000) to acquire all the necessaries for your first job. The game is icon driven and you are given a window containing the initial options: New Game, Load Team, save Team, Set Target, Hire Team, Pick Fence and Plan Raid. New Game allows you to reset the database and restart the game from the beginning. Save and Load Team simply allow you to save or load the current status of the database and your team.

The game really starts when you chose the Set Target option. Another window will appear with a list of five possible jobs; Coin dealers, Art Gallery, Diamond Merchant, High Street Bank and the Narburak Museum and a view option after each. Once one is chosen it gives you some basic info on the location and the option to buy the blueprints. As you make your way down the list the price of the blueprints will increase with the importance of the location. When you have chosen what you are going for another window will appear offering you information on the value of the swag within, security data, and the alarm systems. Information on each must be bought or else when it comes to planning the raid locations of the loot, alarms etc will not be shown on the blueprints.

After choosing the target it comes to your team. With the info already acquired you will be able to choose the persons with the skills needed. There are a total of eighteen thugs to be hired, each of which have a specific skill and a secondary skill. You can examine the information folders on any of the available team members before making your choice. A person with say, safe cracking as their first skill, will take less time than one with it as a secondary skill. You can have between one and four members in your team at any time and they can be fired at any time up to the blueprint stage. Each member has a hiring price and will take a certain percentage of the loot once the robbery is completed.

Last, but not least, comes the selection of the fence to get rid of the loot. Here you have five options and again are able to look through their folders to find out what they deal in before hiring one. Each of the fences deals in two specific areas say, artwork and gold . . . And now comes the Plan Raid stage.

Once this stage has loaded the top part of the screen becomes a window on the blueprint of the target you have selected. The lower part contains the control icons and the display windows which you will use to instruct the various team members. This is the section in which you create the 'tracks' which the team members will follow during the actual robbery. You can individually control each member and instruct him where to go and what to do. Each action, such as pick a lock, smash a case, deactivate an alarm, takes a specific time and all the actions of the individual members must be coordinated. Coordination is the key and you must plan the robbery out so as the members do not get in each other's way. The clock displays the current time for each member and updates with every instruction.

Once you are satisfied with your planning you then select the 'Commit Robbery' icon and it will all happen before your eyes. When the robbery is taking place you can use the 'Assist' icon which will let you view the progress of the team and assist them if required. If the police are spotted you can temporarily freeze the actions of the team until they pass. There are also icons for aborting the robbery and legging it if things get a little sticky. If it all goes as planned then you cash in on the loot and set about planning your next big job, if not then you can start all over again. Who said crime doesn't pay?

Mass — CRITICISM

Bloody frustrating but a hell of a game! I have always dreamt of pulling off the big one and here was my chance. Quite a lot of concentration is needed to take in all the info given for if one vital piece is missed it could have disastrous consequences. In the end it's all worth it. It's a nice feeling to know that you've just made 100 grand and it's great fun getting there. This game has enormous playability and plenty of options, it had me playing all day. Although the graphics are sparse and the sound minimal you don't really notice as you are totally engrossed in the actual playing of the game. An excellent game with plenty of appeal.

PRESENTATION 87%
Lovely scenario, uncomplicated.

GRAPHICS 48%
Sparce but not that important.

SOUND 30%
Limited to a few bleeps a bang and a siren.

PLAYABILITY 89%
Straight in, and no messin'.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 86%
Being on the other side of the law is so much more fun!

VALUE FOR MONEY 88%
Ten quid for a possible million, good deal that!

OVERALL 83%
A game with plenty of appeal.

NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE

Piranha, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

Nosferatu, a hideous inhuman spectre of the night, is getting fed up with his dingy old castle. You must understand his predicament — all by himself in a big castle, the cleaning and dusting must take him days. It's just far too much work for him, he just can't keep it up. Being a clever sort of spectre he thinks it's time for a move. No more of this dark castle miles from anywhere lark, he fancies a nice semi in a remote hamlet called Wismar.

Unfortunatly Jon Harker just happens to be an estate agent who is selling this house — you play Jon. You have been sent to his castle to complete the sale and you've discovered his secret! Gasp! Shock! Horror!

Now you must act as fast as your brain can think. If old Nossybabes moves into his dream cottage then he will soon spread his wrath (and his cloak!) over the bumkins who already inhabit Wismar, turning them all into Vampyres — this must obviously be prevented. You left the deeds to his house on the dining room table back at the castle, but they have disappeared. It's up to you to find them and escape as soon as you can. Nosferatu is at his most nasty at night, when the castle doors are locked and the only light is that from the moon which pours in through the arched windows.

The rooms are displayed in forced 3D isometric, showing all manner of castle type artefacts. Wardrobes, great open hearths, candles, crucifixes and swords on the wall. Nearly all objects can be manipulated — most useful are the swords. These can be used to battle against the fiends that inhabit the castle along with Nosferatu — they include nasty 'n' mean guard dogs, ankle sucking rats and throat nibbling bats, all of which are out to endanger your quest (and your life). Movement around the castle is achieved simply by trotting through the doors and the secret passages — the screens move in good ol' flick screen style. Locate the deeds to the house and you can make good your escape.

Once outside the castle you may think that your quest is over but not quite. As well as the main character you now also take control of Lucy, your wife, and van Helsing, Lucy's brother-in-law and close admirer. Nosferatu has been drawn to Wismar by Lucy's special power of attraction, unknown to you she is the only one who can conquer the Vamp once and for all.

Mass — CRITICISM

By now all you lovely readers should have gathered that my personal view on 3D games are somewhat sceptical — I don't like them! OK so the screens are all very clever and pretty and this one is no exception. Wandering around looking for things bores me. The only difference here is that you control more than one character. Nope, not one for me!



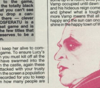
Richard — CRITICISM

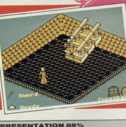
Now this is what I call a challenge! Loads of rooms to explore, lots of puzzles to solve — all great fun. Although appearing similar in style to NEXOR, it has a great deal more going for it, such as the improved graphics which give the game a lot of atmosphere. The playing area is a huge one so maps will be helpful, it's quite easy to get lost in that big castle. There are quite a few neat touches to the game, such as the totally black room that you can't see until you drop a candelabra there — clever huh? NOSFERATU is a really neat game and is one of the few titles that really deserves to be a film tie-in.

You must keep her alive to complete the game. To ensure Lucy's protection you must kill off all the rats that have swarmed into the town from the castle, again these can be attacked with your trusty sword. On the screen a population count is recorded for you to keep an eye on how many people are still surviving — it also acts as a status score so you know how well you're doing.

If you have the deeds, Nosferatu will be forced to wander the streets and take shelter at night. If you manage to trap him in one room for long enough then his bloodlust for Lucy will grow stronger and you can lure him into the house and to his ultimate destruction.

The third part of the quest in set in Lucy's house; where you, as Lucy, must end the Vamp's miserable life. Unfortunately your mate and van Helsing will insist on keeping you locked up in the house, unable to get at Nosferatu. Here you must lock the terrible twosome up in a room, while you keep Vamp occupied until dawn breaks and his hideous reign comes to an end (phew! what a toughie). No more Vamp means that all will be happy and the sun can once more shine in the happy town of Wismar.







PRESENTATION 89%
Good selection of Design Design options.

GRAPHICS 87%
Well animated 3D.

SOUND 79%
Jolly tune throughout.

PLAYABILITY 84%
Easy to get into . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 82%
. . . but a challenge to solve.

VALUE FOR MONEY 80%
Cheaper than the video.

OVERALL 88%
A great little 3D game by Design Design.


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CITY SLICKER

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys



Something is amiss in London town, there is an air of impending doom. The awesome forces of urban terrorism have chosen for their next target the most sacred of sacred, the Houses of Parliament. At the head of the dastardly plot to blow up the very essence of democracy is the fiendish arab, Abru Caddabra. Is there anyone who can foil this devious plot?

Richard — CRITICISM

CITY SLICKER didn't really appeal to me to begin with, but once you start delving into the puzzles you're hooked before you realise it. The appealing aspect is that you don't have to cart objects from screen to screen in a vain attempt to use them, most can be picked up and used on the screen that they are found on. Graphically, it's not the best thing ever witnessed — the characters do tend to get messy when they collide — but apart from that it's a neat game that will keep you happy in those cold winter months.

Slick, known to all the in crowd as *City Slicker*, is the 'coolest dude in the big smoke' and being the person he is, keeps his ears pretty much to the ground. Whilst listening to the grapevine one day he hears tell of this plot to rock the very foundations of our glorious nation and takes it upon himself to stop the evil scrupulous Abru.

You play the part of the heroic Slick in his attempt to construct a BDU (Bomb Disposal Unit) of which the components are scattered across London in such diverse locations as Buckingham Palace, the British Museum, and the Tower of London.

At the start of the game the bomb is already set in the Houses of Parliament; the time is 8am and if you should fail to defuse it by the time the clock strikes 12pm, then the house comes to an untimely end and Abru has succeeded. Slick must pick up the various pieces of the BDU and take them to his secret hide away, cleverly disguised in the Houses of Parliament.

Many other objects can be found lying around in the various locations and Slick can pick up and carry six of them around to help him in his task. For all this running around, leaping and searching, Slick needs energy and at the start of the game he has three Pep Pills. As he continues on his task his energy level slowly decreases and the distances he can jump is proportionate to the energy he has left; the less energy the lesser the distance he can jump. Luckily extra Pep Pills and items of food can be found on his travels to boost his energy. These, more often than not, must be taken when the opportunity arises.

Of course the task is not just one of searching as there are an array of hostile things in the game, such as Beefeaters and pigeons that Slick must avoid or they will deplete his energy on contact. To add to the problems, every hour on the hour, and every fifteen minutes, a warning will sound and the evil Abru will enter the room in which Slick is presently situated. Abru is constantly on Slick's trail and if he catches him it's instant death and the end of the game.

Once Slick has constructed the BDU it miniaturises and can be carried to the bomb. Slick must then drop it and it will start lobbing buckets of water at the bomb until finally it is defused at which time Abru will self destruct.

What's the problem? After all it's all in a days work for a super cool dude like the City Slicker.

Anthony — CRITICISM

Although at first this seems to be yet another platform game, there are some great features that put it ahead of most of the others. The half screen flick between screens is very disconcerting to begin with, but once you get use to it it can be a great help. The puzzles are difficult and at times a little vague, I am afraid that I still think platform games, where skill is all that is required and the only difficult bits are how you get up to that bottle to collect it, are the best. CITY SLICKER is not in the class of JET SET WILLY but it is still a very good game.

Mass — CRITICISM

CITY SLICKER is a neat variation to an old platform game theme. Instead of there being a large amount of rooms there are a few large rooms to be roamed around, and, instead of the full screen flick, there is a half-flick, which takes a while to get used to as I kept expecting the character to appear at the end of the screen; instead it appears in the centre. Although Abru can easily be avoided he can become a pain at times as he positions himself in some damn annoying places. Another twist is that objects themselves can pick up other objects and they must be persuaded to part with them by various means. On the whole a very nice challenging game that should keep any arcade player glued to his Amstrad for hours.

PRESENTATION 74%
Useful demo mode, slick scenario.

GRAPHICS 72%
Simple, but effective.

SOUND 67%
Nothing mega, suits purpose well.

PLAYABILITY 79%
Plenty of things to do, in no particular order.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 80%
Before you realise you'll be hooked.

VALUE FOR MONEY 72%
Quite fair, considering the content.

OVERALL 75%
A pleasing game that will have masses of appeal.

ICON JON

Mirrorsoft, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk, joystick or keys

Down in the depths of your Amstrad resides many a carefree program. Most of these are happy with their Mayfly existence, written one moment, used the next and then wiped clean from the memory. Most of them, that is, but not one certain program who insists on maintaining his presence — his name is **Icon Jon**.

In order to escape certain death by power down, Jon must find a way to escape from the hardware world that is currently his only abode — and this is where you come in . . .

If Jon is to escape intact (or at least alive), you as the User must interface directly with him and his friends, two permanent residents who go by the respective names of Andy Capacitator and Charlie Chiplin (Groan!). Luckily your task has been made easier by a team of boffins, who have developed a system far superior to any seen before. The system, HCID (which stands for Human to Component Interface Device), allows you the all important link between you and Icon Jon.

The whole method of control is down to the HCID system and consists of ten icons which all open out into sub-menus. The ten icons consist of:

Status: whereby you can examine how far you are from rescuing **Icon Jon**. This also provides you with an indication of the temperaments of both Charlie and Andy.

Chat: all of the other characters are quite conversant on many subjects including the weather, gardening and reviewers (Charming!). They might even be able to help you, should you treat them with respect.

Type: this icon connects you to any terminal on a wall — from this you can call lifts, select printers and do all sorts of interesting 'n' useful things.

Manipulate: gives you access to all sorts of options. You can wave, rub, combine two objects, dig and hit. These may not appear very obviously useful at first, but Jon will need them in time.

Act: once again a list appears, this one allows you to select any one of the following options — pick up, drop, give and examine.

Move: the only, but essential, use of this is to leave the HCID operating system and return movement to the playing area.

Notepad: this icon brings up a blank screen on which you can make any notes which you may feel will be relevant later in the game.

Help: pretty obvious really — but this also includes an update on where your mateys are.

Quit: simply ends the game.

Various objects which will assist Jon in his search for freedom, can be found scattered around the Amstrad's innards. These can range from a toothbrush to a UB40 LP, which means your next port of call will be the unemployment office (Double groan!). Jon has a limited time in which to complete his assignment, and, should he fail, the program will crash. This takes you to that all familiar Amstrad sign logo. Oh no . . .

Anthony — CRITICISM

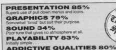
ICON JON may be comical, witty and very well executed but I am afraid that it didn't really appeal to me. It's very good as arcade adventures go, but the sequence of events is so obscure, that unless you have some inside info it's going to take you quite a long time to get somewhere. The icon system is very easy to use (though not particularly fast), and enhances the game quite a lot. A good, highly polished game that should appeal to all those who enjoyed the Wally games.

Mass — CRITICISM

The game gets off to a bad start with a pretty awful tune, but you soon forget this when you start wandering around. Overall the game is witty and amusing, but it had me roaming around getting nowhere for quite a considerable time. Having said that, once you get accustomed to the whereabouts of the rooms it becomes a matter of routine. The icon system is relatively slow. However it is very simple to use, giving an overall feel of a leisurely stroll in the park. ICON JON certainly keeps you amused, and in the end that's all that matters.

Richard — CRITICISM

ICON JON has absolutely masses of comic appeal, it's full of puns and quips. The overall 'feel' is very logical, but don't get put off by that phrase because it's also very enjoyable right from the outset. This enjoyment is marred slightly by the screechy music which drones away in the background — it's just as well it had an off key or it would have driven me nuts! If you fancy an arcade adventure that's a bit out of the ordinary, give this one a whirl — it's original, funny, challenging, and most important of all it's fun.



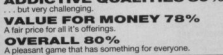
PRESENTATION 85%
Superb use of pull down menus and icons.

GRAPHICS 79%
Somewhat 'timid' but suit their purpose.

SOUND 34%
Poor tune that gives no atmosphere at all.

PLAYABILITY 83%
Initially simple . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 80%
. . . but very challenging.



VALUE FOR MONEY 78%
A fair price for all it's offerings.

OVERALL 80%
A pleasant game that has something for everyone.



AMTIX Christmas Special

VIRGIN ATLANTIC CHALLENGE GAME

Virgin Software, cass £9.95

Yes folks, star of stage, screen and video, Mrs Thatcher's Golden Boy and media flavour of the month, Richard Branson, now goes for the ultimate ego trip: starring in his own computer game.

Not even those epic egosters on ZZAP! have ever done that! When he's not cleaning up Britain, or making his millions, there's nothing our golden wonder boy likes better than chugging around that little pond, the little old Atlantic Ocean, after the elusive Blue Riband trophy for the fastest crossing. But those nasty old Americans aren't even going to give him the trophy, some childish excuse like the cup was meant to be for ocean going liners and not overgrown speed boats.

Be that as it may, this game recreates the successful second attempt of Mr Branson and his merry men. The boat must be piloted across the Atlantic in the quickest possible time.

Lee — CRITICISM

Well, it's not awfully good is it? For a start it doesn't fall easily into any particular category: there's not enough action for an arcade game, there isn't enough strategy for a strategy game and there aren't any problems to solve. Some of the graphics are quite pretty, but some of the promised bits and pieces, like the tanker, never even appear. It seemed unduly harsh at times, sometimes you get no chance to respond when something goes wrong. Well, perhaps his mum will buy a copy.

Mr Branson controls his boat with a number of sub screens. The main screen shows a cut away view of the boat. Distributed along it's length are the telex machine, the radar, the galley, the map, the bridge and the engine room. Each of these positions can be accessed by pushing forward with the joystick. This brings up another screen with various bits of information. The telex informs our hero of the latest stunning business opportunities open to him and asks for instant Yes/No decisions about them, this either makes or loses Mr Branson a lorra lorra spondoliks.

Next comes the radar. This tells the Golden Wonder boy where the next fuel tanker is. The boat has to make three refuelling stops with tankers parked out in the middle of the Atlantic. After that, comes the Galley. Now Richard is quite a keen trencherman and enjoys three square meals a day, plus the odd snack. If he goes without his videls, he goes a nasty shade of green and slows down a lot. If nothing is done after that, well, the consequences are just too terrible to think of.

Next, the map shows the Challenger's progress across the briney. Further aft (good seafaring type term that) comes the bridge. The boat is steered from here and an eye can be kept on the weather outside. Last, probably the most important bit, the engine room.

Richard — CRITICISM

Richard Branson may have had an exciting time crossing the Atlantic but this game fails to capture any of the spirit of the ancient mariner at all. I don't know how many instrument failures he had but the radar in this game only gave a bearing to refuelling ships and failed to either show them as a radar blip, as promised in the instructions, or let me see them from the bridge — perhaps Richard was in a bit of a financial pickle and used smaller ones to save money. Whatever happened, the graphics are quite neat but the gameplay is sadly missing and therefore Mr Branson's game leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Now you wouldn't expect Dicky to get his hands mucky in amongst the gaskets, he just keeps an eye on the hull stress and temperature. The boat has to slow down if these things get too high.

When things go wrong, the computer puts up a message to tell Richard what is wrong. 'you are about to hit a fishing boat', or 'your perm has come out' are just two of the urgent messages Dicky can get. He must respond to these immediately or it could be the end for Challenger!

Skippy!! — CRITICISM

If this is how Richard Branson made it across the Atlantic, then he deserves the Blue Riband, a gold medal, and all other sorts of acclamations, 'cos this guy must be made of pretty good stuff if he can live though this for more ten minutes. Maybe ten minutes is going a bit too light on it. In simple terms, VIRGIN ATLANTIC CHALLENGER is the pits. I think it's absolute trash. It's about as good value for money as the average person buying a Challenger II, and about as much use. Why anyone could play a game like this, and even how anyone could write it, is more than a mystery to me. I've seen some pretty bad games as a reviewer, and VIRGIN ATLANTIC CHALLENGER is certainly one of them. Stay WELL clear, if you value your life, your sanity, or anything else!

PRESENTATION 58%
Straightforward and clear, but undramatic.

GRAPHICS 60%
Nothing terribly more here either.

SOUND 24%
Bl-la-la-lup, bl-lal-la-lop, and that's your lot.

PLAYABILITY 43%
A bit of a toughy.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 28%
About as interesting as the real thing.

VALUE FOR MONEY 12%
Ripoffsville Arizona.

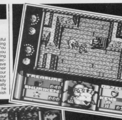
OVERALL 26%
C'mon Virgin, let's have another Dan Dare.

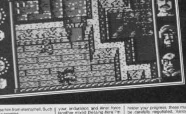
AVENGER

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

You have proven your worthiness to hold the title of Master Warrior of Martial Arts, now however you face a perilous and deadly task.

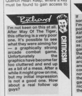
Master of the Flame, Yaemon, has struck again and taken the Scrolls of Ketsuin from the temple, while carrying out this dastardly deed he has also murdered your stepfather, Naijishi. Fired by revenge, you set out to retrieve the scrolls from the evil Yaemon, to appease the God Kwon and Yaemon's minions are plentiful and you must use all your cunning as a Master to fight them off. You may kick and punch them but you also have Shuricans (throwing stars), these are particularly effective. Good thing too, as they have to be used wisely because of their limited supply. As you fight your way through the nasties your energy level decreases, but luckily for you the God Kwon is not totally powerless in his captivity and he may be called upon to replenish





release him from eternal hell. Such is your promise.

Your quest starts outside Quench Heart Keep, where a key must be found to gain access to


Richard

CRITICISM

I'm not keen on this at all. After Way Of The Tiger, this offering is a very poor one. It's possible to see what they were aiming for — a graphically strong arcade combat game. Unfortunately the graphics have become far too cluttered and end up as a bit of a mess. After a while it might grow on me, but my initial impression is not a good one. How about a real follow up guys?

Yaemon's domain. Once inside the three guardians of the Keep must be killed, but be careful as these may only be killed in a certain way. As well as the guardians, your endurance and inner force (another mixed blessing here I'm afraid, as his temper is rather short

Mass

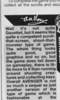
CRITICISM

If you're looking for something new in this one I'm afraid you'll be disappointed. Although AVENGER is a well presented game and graphically sound, It strikes me as just another Druid type game. The basic idea is the same as the aforementioned, running around killing the nasties and collecting objects. Of course this one has a few novel concepts, including the living floors, but the gameplay is the same. A nice game on an old theme.

and you may anger him).

As you make your way through the numerous rooms you may notice that the floors are alive. Spikes rise in and out of them to hinder your progress, these must be carefully negotiated. Various objects such as magic swords, keys, shuricans, crowbars, iron fists, amulets, charms, a container and a magic cord may be encountered in these rooms, all of these are helpful to you in your quest. You will also come across chests laden with treasures that can be collected for your personal gain, but be careful not to let greed affect your judgement. Trap doors and Grills will give you access to further levels both above and below.

To complete the game you must collect all the scrolls and escape


AnThony

CRITICISM

Well it's not quite Gauntlet, but it seems like quite a competent scroll-that-screen, shoot-that-monster type of game. The whole thing looks quite good, good graphics and so on, but the game does fall down on gameplay, there is little more to it than running around shooting creatures and collecting keys. Overall AVENGER is not so much a sequel as just another version of the type of game which is fashionable at the moment.

from the Keep. This avenges your fathers death and releases Kwon from the power of Yaemon.

May Kwon be with you!!

PRESENTATION 71%
Straightforward, nothing's amiss.

GRAPHICS 80%
Very neat, though too colourful in places.

SOUND 63%
Atmospheric FX.

PLAYABILITY 78%
The usual run around killing nasties bit.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 75%
Should keep any arcade player busy for hours.

VALUE FOR MONEY 69%
If you like Druid — buy it.

OVERALL 73%
A good arcade game, though nothing out of the ordinary.

FUTURE KNIGHT

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, joystick only

Aeons from now, in a world of strange behaviour, a peculiar practice is at work. The land is ruled by a evil and wicked king who is only out for his own, erm, pleasure — of the sensual kind. After a flaming row with his beloved wife he banished her from the court and now, some two weeks later, he's finding it difficult to find satisfaction. His eye caught a fleeting glimpse of a gorgeous maiden who delivers the milk. Being of the unrestrainable sort old flabby guts has sent his evil minions to capture her and she now resides in the uppermost turret of his castle.

This might normally strike you as a normal occurrence — he's had a long string of fancies — but this is the last straw. The voluptuous one just happens to be your bit of fluff, your darlin', your girlie pal — and you are desperate for revenge. Luckily you just happen to be a Knight of the Future — a galloping crusader. So it's off you plod to the castle to rescue the damsel, but the King gets word of your plot and fills the castle with a selection of well mean 'n' nasty minions. You brave the awaiting perils and enter . . .

The castle is constructed from various slabs of high density platinum which are totally resistant to any pounding — so your route through the castle is clearly marked. To kill off all the various meanies that haunt the castle you will need some weaponry. To begin your quest you are equipped with a small gun but various weapons can be found throughout. They are located in a cabinet with a piccy of a gun on it. When you stand near the cabinet it will drop a gun for you; you may also have a bomb, which destroys all aliens on screen; a confuser, which hassles all the aliens for a limited amount of time; a Flash Bang, which — well, it speaks for itself really.

Travel around the castle is done by carefully manoeuvering your bulbous body around the various screens — each with their own network of platforms and ladders. Some of the aliens have pre-set routes along these platforms — others may simply follow you around until you blast them into eternity. Various spells can also be located around the castle. These range from Bridge spells to Passes which will allow you to leave the levels of the castle.

Your energy is recorded as a slowly descending score — starting on 999. When it reaches 0 you are no more, one dead hero — oh dear. Once you've battled through all the levels, killed off the meanies you'll be allowed to be reunited with your loved one, go home and everything will be tickity boo.

Mass — CRITICISM

OK, so the hero looks a little over weight but he fits in nicely with the overall outlook of the game. The graphics are smart and the characters move well although leaping around is rather a precise business as in some cases the space given to do so is somewhat tight. He observes all the laws of gravity and if he falls too far he ends up crumpled on the floor shaking his head in disgust. Poor ol' chubby doesn't half have to face some big buggers. In some screens there are some huge robot types and it took me a while to realise that you can actually kill them — they take a lot of shooting. Not a classic game but all the same it's enjoyably playable.

Richard — CRITICISM

FUTURE KNIGHT has some very appealing qualities to it, it also has some features that are slightly annoying. Firstly the good news — there's some great graphics and action there but maybe the character under your control is a bit porky. The game is full of humorous touches such as if you don't do anything with Mr Future he performs a cute little dance to while away the time. On the bad side it can all get just a wee bit tedious, and that's what lets it down — it's worth doing a rain check on it though.

Anthony — CRITICISM

I can't fault this game at all, the graphics are good, the sound just right, the plot totally unrealistic (like all good games) and the whole thing is very polished. The large guardians that come after you are done very well, even if they are not animated. There are plenty of traps to get you stuck, the only way out being to start the game again. If you are after mind numbing, high speed action then FUTURE KNIGHT will not appeal to you, but if you like a medium pace, thought provoking game that also offers action then go out and get it.

AMTIX! Christmas Special

PRESENTATION 72%
Neat and self explanatory.

GRAPHICS 75%
Well defined, with a pleasant overall look.

SOUND 64%
Great atmospheric medieval type soundtrack, nice FX.

PLAYABILITY 76%
Easy to get into but precise jumping is required.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 72%
Should keep most gamesters amused for a considerable time.

VALUE FOR MONEY 71%
Ten quid, well aren't most good games?

OVERALL 73%
Nothing special, but worth a look all the same.



KETTLE

Alligata, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Of all the household objects you could have been you have chosen to be a kettle and as luck would have it you've been trapped in a complex underground system. There are 30 levels, each getting bigger as you progress, and you must work your way through in order to break free. In each level there is a Bowel, rather like an earthen pot, which emits bubbles. Collision with these bubbles drains your energy. Your only defence is your orbiting "Crizza".

The Crizza spins around the kettle protecting it from the bubbles but it can also be shot in any direction by pressing the fire button at the appropriate time. Ten hits on the bowel and it will change into a diamond and one hit on the diamond will reveal either a tin opener, a bonus, an energy giving jug of water, or an alien which can be destroyed by three hits. The opener must be collected and taken to a hatch, leading to the next level, which will open as you approach it.

On loading you are given a one or two player option. If one player is chosen then another option is open to you; whether you wish one or two kettles. With two kettles, although you only control the one, the second kettle follows you around. This can be very useful for protection purposes as there is another Crizza whizzing around. There are also two Crizza modes; proceed — where the Crizza doesn't return until the fire button is released — and Retreat. Here the Crizza returns to its orbit around your kettle.

On two player mode the screen is split in two allowing you to monitor an opponent's progress. You can either help him, hinder him or, if you're the sneaky sort, watch him do all the work then nip in and collect the spoils. If your opponent collects the opener first you are still able to follow him through the already open hatch.

Two little Kettle mateys are about to get hassle from an alien, luckily they've got their Crizzas to protect them.

The bowel continues to throw up bubbles — to put Kettle in hot water (sic).

Anthony — CRITICISM

I was expecting something really good from Alligata but unfortunately this should have been released on a budget label. There are not too many two player games and in that it scores quite well as, if the players do not co-operate, one or the other is likely to run out of energy and die. Like so many times before, KETTLE is a game that could have been made much better but the idea of flying around a maze destroying things and gaining keys to later levels is getting very old hat.

Richard — CRITICISM

KETTLE could have been a fun game — but it isn't. KETTLE could have been a graphically good game — but it isn't. KETTLE could have had a good sound track — but it hasn't. Such a pity really. It's like this comment really — it's repetitive. Another great game from Alligata — don't buy it!

Mass — CRITICISM

Although KETTLE is well presented, with plenty of options, it totally failed to impress me. What really put me off was the poor graphics and animation. Mr blocky or what! I thought there was an earth tremor the way my kettle shook when trying to get through the hatch. The scrolling is pretty bad as well with the scenery splitting up at times. On the two player game it can become rather difficult to know where the hell you are. Far too much strain for the old mince pies. It might appeal to some people but for me, YAUUCCCHHHHH!!!

PRESENTATION 67%
Nice demo, plenty of options.

GRAPHICS 55%
Very naff in places.

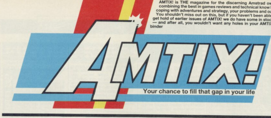
SOUND 61%
Adequate FX, and the tune's ok.

PLAYABILITY 58%
Very confusing on two player mode.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 45%
Tiresome after a while.

VALUE FOR MONEY 53%
A fair price but a bad game.

OVERALL 58%
Could have been good but quickly went off the boil.



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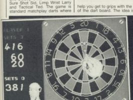
REVIEWS

BUDGET

180

Mastertronic, £2.99 cass

Won hondered und Ateeey! It's that elusive score which has been so difficult to achieve for so long. Now you can practice in the comfort of your own armchair without having to go down to the pub in the pouring rain. There's three variations of darts — the first one is normal play. The computer has a team of six players all veritable experts with the old arrows; Mega Mick, Belly Bill, Delboy Des, Devious Dave, Sure Shot Sid, Limp Wrist Larry and Tactical Ted. The game is standard matchplay darts where



the two players compete to see who can score 501 first on a basis out of three called 'sets'.

You control a wobbly hand that makes it way round the board controlled by your joystick — when you want to throw the dart press fire and your score will be chalked up on the blackboard beside the dartboard. When you have taken

Surprising as it may seem 180 is a damn good game — the sort of game that is suited to the MAD Label. The animation and graphics are superb and have been well thought out to provide the upmost clarity. 180 is rammed full of humour, especially from the opposing characters — Limp Wrist Larry — I ask you! The games are great fun to play especially with the variety of options in the game. It'll take some time to master but it'll be great fun practising.

your turn your opponent will take his go - you will be told which segment he is aiming at and which he hits. With the maximum score being the infamous 180 it follows that the highest number you can finish on is 170 — but there are easier ways to score, most of the winning combinations below that.

To get some practice in for the battle of the beer belly's you can play Clock Darts which should

This has to be one of my all time fave budget games. The game play is superb but that is not to say that it is easy, in fact quite the opposite. The level of difficulty has been set so as to keep you coming back for more without discouraging you. Winning is always so satisfying. The graphics and animation are excellent and there's a nice tune to match. So take the oche, it's well worth your dosh!

help you get to grips with the feel of the dart board. The idea is to gradually work your way around the dart board from 20 to 1 in a preset time. If you manage it without missing you will be fit enough to compete in the tournament. It is also possible to play a two player round against another aspiring opponent — both with the not-so-trusty wobbly hands.

Should you be proficient to compete in the championship tournament then you will be up against Jammy Jimmy — to beat him you will have to be more than amazing.

Presentation 83%
Plenty of options and a warm up mode.

Graphics 86%
Very smart!

Sound 72%
Nice tune, thud as the darts hit the board.

Playability 85%
Like all good games takes a lot of practice.

Addictive Qualities 80%
80? Shouldn't it be 180?

Value for money 89%
Cheap but definitely not nasty — buy it!

Overall 85%
Simply a great darts game!!!

TERRA COGNITA

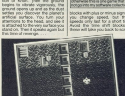
Code Masters, £2.99 cass

Krion, a planet far into the future, a planet orbiting a decaying sun, a planet which you, with two fellow mining engineers, have been sent to survey. Leaving the safety of the mother ship you descend to the planet surface in a small scout craft and travel far across the seemingly uninhabited surface. Whilst wandering around you come across the remains of a Warrior Robot — just it's head. Being of curious nature, one of your party kicks it — the head begins to speak and tells the awesome tale of mankind's destruction of Krion. Then the ground begins to vibrate vigorously, the ground opens up and as the dust settles you discover the planet's artificial surface. You turn your attentions to the head, and see it is attached to the very surface you stand on. Then it speaks again but this time of revenge. . . .

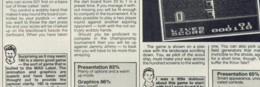
controlled droids must be eliminated with your photon lasers or avoided. Fuel, extra lives and bonus points can be picked up by flying over the appropriate blocks on the surface. By flying over

Unlike Mass, I found this game quite tedious. I suppose it is a good blast-em-up for only 3 quid but it is not very original. The way the screen scrolls by is very similar to BOUNDER but there is very little to keep you going once you get the hang of the game. There are a few good features, the different ways the block interact with your ship, but otherwise this is one game that will not go into my software collection.

blocks with plus or minus signs on you change speed, but these speeds only last for a short time. Avoid the time shift blocks as these will take you back to screen







The game is shown on a plan view with the landscape scrolling down. You, as pilot of the scout ship, must make your way across the hundred screens to the waiting

I was a little dubious about this game to start with but I soon found it to be the sort of game that grows on you. Once you get used to the purpose of the many brightly coloured blocks on screen and remember what not to run into, it becomes very enjoyable. I particularly like the change of speed blocks as these must be used at specific times if you wish to get through safely. A very presentable game for a very reasonable price.

mother ship. But this is not easy as the computer has activated flashing force field beams that rise up onto the surface, and these must be avoided. Waves of computer

one. You can also pick up force field generators that make you invincible to the droids, again only for a short time, though. Will you suffer the Krion fate?

Presentation 65%
Smart appearance, uncomplicated controls.

Graphics 70%
Colourful and clear.

Sound 35%
Sufficient but nothing special.

Playability 66%
In the action from the word go.

Addictive Qualities 54%
Probably not long lasting.

Value for money 68%
Excellent.

Overall 66%
An impressive budget shoot'em up.

PIPELINE II

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

Holes in the pipes means our hero, Foreman Fred, could soon have holes in him! Poor Fred has a problem. The pipes must be kept open and the barrels filled, or Sheikh Aleg, the owner of the plant, will have bits of his anatomy removed by rather unpleasant means. The trouble is that overnight the workshop has gone berserk and untold hordes of manic drills hammers and other assorted sharp implements are wandering around the pipes trying to punch holes in them. Luckily Fred has a gun to beat off the attacks and an unlimited supply of willing but slightly dense assistants (all called Will). If there is a leak in the works Will can fix it.

The only problem is keeping Will unmolested while he mends the holes with his trusty Irish screwdriver (hammer!). One other small complication is that a rival engineer has seen fit to release his entire insect collection onto the pipes — most of which are very nasty, eight legged pieces of work. You assume the role of Fred and with your gun you must attempt to keep the pipes clear. If there is a leak then you must lead Will to it so he can do his job. This is done by just walking over him, he will then follow you. If you are too slow in stopping the leak the level in the tank will decrease and so will your score, and if it empties — forget it!

You can afford to lose countless Wills without loss of points, so long as Fred keeps on the job. Contact with any machinery will knock Fred or Will off the pipes with disastrous consequences. Use Will as a shield if you have to, he's expendable and there will be another along shortly. Think of number one and keep those barrels filling. Oh, and watch out for the scorpions, they will follow Fred unrelentiously.

Fred seems a bit of sadist if you ask me, but I suppose it's more than his jobs worth to think about poor old Will. I like PIPELINE, it's the sort of game where you have to experiment on each screen before you find the right place to position Fred to keep him and the pipes safe. Once a screen has been accomplished it's easily done again. Somewhat satisfying. The graphics and animation are neat and there is a dinky but rather repetitive little tune. A game well worth adding to your collection.

PIPELINE sure is a well fun game, one that I would have played for ages if I didn't have so much work to do. The graphics are well implemented, with some very humourous characters. My only gripe is that certain characters are hard to see and recognise when they retreat behind a pipe. Not to worry it's a neat game that is well worth two quid.

Presentation 67%
Nice demo, plenty of options.

Graphics 69%
Very neat, serve the purpose well.

Sound 57%
FX are OK, tune gets on your nerves after a while.

Playability 70%
Trial and error.

Addictive Qualities 65%
Tough screens, but very satisfying once completed.

Value for money 73%
Mastertronic says it all.

Overall 70%
A great little game. Buy it!

OBSIDIAN

Americana, £2.99 cassette

The space station, Obsidian, built within a huge asteroid, is on course for a black hole. The subterranean station is shielded by a gravity protection field which is generated by five engines. The station is thus prepared to enter another universe and rendezvous with its sister ship. Although the force field protects the station it is not able to protect the crew from the immense gravitational forces of the black hole. The crew has transferred to a specially shielded ship ready to follow Obsidian when suddenly disaster strikes. A freak radiation storm deactivates the station's power system.

Being the only person with sufficient knowledge and experience, it is your job to beam aboard Obsidian, reactivate the power system, start the engines and reset the flight plan and all before the station's engines carry you unshielded into the black hole. To guard against alien infiltration Obsidian has many security systems, so to enable you to move around you must collect items from their gravity containers hanging from the ceiling. Only one object can be carried at any time. By flying up to the containers and pressing FIRE, you will exchange the object, in the container, with whatever you are carrying.

You must work what objects are used to overcome the various security systems. There are an array of security droids which either fire at you or hinder your progress. Contact with these or with laser beams across passages, will cause the loss of one of your five lives. They must be avoided as you have no means of defence, only quick thinking.

As you fly around your power pack uses up its 'nitro' supply and once empty it will explode. But there are points in the station in which you can replenish your supply — the trouble is finding them.

When this game came out all those months ago as a full price game is was one of my favourites. Now it has come back as a budget game it's an even better buy. The best thing about it is you don't have to zap everything in sight, it's all brain work as well as a little luck. This is one game that should keep you going for a while. Everyone should have this game in their software collection.

OBSIDIAN is based along the old lines of running around a maze searching for things, but with a twist — you can't fire back. Oddly as it may seem, this makes it very playable as a lot of thought and planning is needed to make your way around the various sections, deactivating the security systems as you go. Again, only being able to carry one object means that each step must be carefully thought out. A clever variation on an old theme.

Presentation 69%
Pretty title screen though few options.

Graphics 70%
Well used base relief effects.

Sound 45% Functional, but not a lot of it.

Playability 75%
All brainwork, bad luck trigger happy fingers.

Addictive Qualities 68%
Should keep you happy over Christmas.

Value for money 69%
Would be a great buy at twice the price.

Overall 70%
A good little stocking filler.

JUNGLE JANE

Bug-Byte, £2.99 cass, joystick and keys

Oh, deary deary, when Tarzan's away the cannibals will play with poor pouting Jane on the menu. Jane is in a hell of a state for the cannibals, nasty horrible heathens that they are, have decided that she looks much more appetising than baked Baboon. But where is beefy Tarzan, why is he not here to protect the lovely lady of the jungle? Well he's off visiting his poor sick old mother unaware of Jane's gastranomic fate. Being carnivorous, the hungry little monkey- like cannibals take an instant dislike to anything of the fruity kind. Luckily for Jane and seeing how it is a jungle, she has an unlimited supply of bananas which she heats up in a strategic place in her tight leopard skin costume which she can then throw at the cannibals to protect herself.

Once loaded with bananas Jane can be found clinging to a vine on the left hand side of the screen on which she can move up and down. The cannibals, holding on to giant Condors, then start their descent from the top of the screen. Jane must use all her jungle skills to knock them off by winging the bananas at them, for if she lets too many reach the bottom and get back up it almost certainly means the pot for Jane. If that isn't enough to worry Jane, there are coconuts which the little bleeders hurtle at her, and if they strike too often then yet again it could mean the pot. If you should be unfortunate enough to let one too many get away he then runs all the way round to the top of Jane's vine and starts chopping at it with his somewhat primitive stone axe. Inevitably Jane then falls into an awaiting pot at the base of the vine.

Do not fear for there is still hope for Jane yet. The pot is not quite hot enough and she can still leap up and down. If you time her jump correctly you may be able to gain Jane an extra life by catching hold of a condor making passes over the pot. If the worst comes to the worst and the Condor reaches the floor the pot will boil and Jane will become the main course for all those starving little devils. Yum, Yum.

JUNGLE JANE seems to me to be rather limited in game play. The various screens I managed to complete consisted of Jane moving up and down a vine attempting to knock the cannibals to the ground with her bananas and that's it. May be there are some different screens further on but I never managed to reach them. The game, for what it is, is graphically sound and pleasantly colourful with the characters moving nice and smoothly. Not one of the best budgets I've ever seen and by no means the worst.

Far, far, far, far too difficult for any of us mere mortals here at the Towers — I didn't get much further than Mass and climbing up and down ropes all doesn't really appeal to me either. If you are willing to persevere with it then you may get some way into the game — but I doubt it. On the plus side the graphics are reasonably bright and jolly and the sound isn't bad either. However, there does seem to be quite a difference between the demo mode and the actual game in that in the demo bananas appear to come at a greater speed while in the game itself you can only have a couple of bananas in the air at any one time. Never mind — if you fancy a challenge it might be fun — only not much.

Presentation 57%
Not bad at all — good few options.

Graphics 56%
Jolly, big and bright.

Sound 37%
Poxy tune

Playability 23%
A wee bit too hard.

Addictive Qualities 22%
Too frustrating to be enjoyable.

Value For Money 38%
Okay -ish.

Overall 35%
An interesting game that's just too hard.

BACK TO REALITY

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

The artifact, a monstrous sphere, has descended upon Ganymede, normally a space observation station, making it suddenly become the centre of the universe. It does not register any gravity, nor any mass — it is there simply in presence. However, and this is where the problem starts, a scientist named Alward has disappeared from Ganymede presumed dead.

Following a surveillance test on the Artifact, intelligence have suggested that Alward is actually inside it — existing somehow. He had managed to link up a primitive radio, and before contact was lost he informed base that he has been set several puzzles to solve — if he doesn't manage to do it then the Artifact will close causing a black hole in the universe — sucking the lot of us to . . . better not to dwell on that subject.

You play Alward so it's all up to you. Not a nice position is it? No. There are several quests which are of vital importance. Firstly you must create anti-matter - combine the correct gasses with silicon and you will have power. Done that? Think you're finished? Nope. Next on the list is to make yourself immortal - this can only be achieved in one section of the Artifact which is reached in a most unconventional manner. The third part of the task is to bring together the matter and anti-matter elements. These will only successfully combine in one certain location, and if the pre-conditions are satisfied. There we go that's it — the fate of the universe rests on your shoulders — once again.

Puzzle adventures are becoming slightly tiresome — especially with puzzles such as the ones here. They are all far too unconnected and unless you search everything you're not going to have any idea where objects are located. The final quest appears to hang so much on luck rather than careful thinking — it all hardly seems worthwhile. The main character walks far too slowly, opposed to the aliens who all have been jogging recently and go at mega fast speed; it's just not fair! If this sort of game appeals to you then it might be worth checking out; otherwise save your pennies.

OBSIDIAN, the prequel to this, was a very enjoyable arcade adventure that involved no killing at all. BACK TO REALITY is in the same vein, even some of the original graphics are in it. The game itself is still okay, but I tended to get bored with it rather quickly, simply because it is so similar to OBSIDIAN. I am not too sure if this game will appeal even to the fans of OBSIDIAN because of this similarity, but if you have not seen the original then it may be worth a look.

Presentation 85%
Very good, clear on screen but the inlay is slightly waffly.

Graphics 75%
Nice implementation of bas-relief graphics.

Sound 54%
Reasonable attempt at a tune.

Playability 51%
Your character is far to slow on his feet.

Addictive Qualities 48%
The difficulty of the puzzles may lead to frustration.

Value For Money 65%
Lots of puzzling for your pennies.

Overall 58%
A worthy follow up to *Obsidian*.



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XARQ

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, joystick and keys

Xarqon is a distant planet where the oceans and seas rage on relentlessly, for Xarqon has no natural land masses. Thirty years ago the United Planets Cooperative set up a Self Build Base on this unlikely world, and through time it has built itself into a massive complex of steel and silicon. Perhaps it was the raging seas and winds, or perhaps a freak radiation storm from the sun, but it is known that sometime in the past the intricate circuitry was corrupted. Whatever the reason, the base has switched itself into Planet Cleansing Mode and has begun to build up energy in its Central Power Reactor. It will eventually use this energy to burn off the face of the planet.

Your mission is to enter *Xarq* and flood the Zimmerman Trenches which riddle the complex, destroying the central reactor. Unfortunately Xarq's defence and repair systems are fully operational, making it a virtually impenetrable fortress.

You start off on your mission in your trusty and fully-armed Hi-Speed Hydraboat, Nik-Nik. Your first task is to break into the base, unfortunately the entrance is sealed by two laser beams and the reactors, at either end of the lasers, must be knocked out to gain entrance. Once inside you must blast away the lock gates allowing the water to enter, thus flooding the trenches. Of course the task is not that simple as *Xarq* has it's own defences. There are gun emplacements buried in the walls of the complex which have to be knocked out with Nik-Nik's lasers.

The walls are thick and the lasers cannot reach some of the emplacements, so, to combat this, you also have at your disposal guided missiles and mortars with much deeper penetration. These are implemented by holding down the appropriate key and the fire button simultaneously until the penetration meter at the bottom of the screen reaches the correct depth and then releasing the fire button. They fire in the direction in which Nik-Nik is facing.

Submarines use sonar to home in on you and then release homing torpedoes at you. You can tell there is a sub in the area by the distinctive ping of the sonar. To combat the subs you have depth charges which are released by pressing the appropriate key.

The Zimmerman Trenches are arranged in concentric piers around the central power reactor. Various coloured beacons are situated around *Xarq* indicating certain facilities such as Pumping and Repair stations, Laser field Generators and Power Fields.

At the bottom of the screen are the status displays and scanners indicating the conditions of the engines, hull, weapons system, scanner, shields, fuel, and water depth of Nik-Nik.

If you fail, another planet bites the dust, or should that be sucks the briny!

Mass — CRITICISM

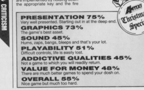
Hmmm, not quite sure about this one. I'm afraid controlling trusty old Nik-Nik is a bit of a pain to say the least. Once you finally get used to the controls, and then work out how the hell to get in, everything is hunky-dory (although you do seem to lose your life rather easily). You are constantly pounded by missiles and the like, and your own supply of missiles and mortars doesn't seem to last very long. Perhaps you can replenish your armoury but I couldn't find out how. The game is graphically good, but there's no soundtrack and the FX are limited to the hum of your craft and a few zaps, bangs and bleeps. A game that requires a lot of perseverence.

Richard — CRITICISM

The problem with XARQ. is that you have no gentle introduction to the game play. Load up and you're plunged right in at the deep end - missiles coming at you from every side, confusion structure of the maze; it's just all a bit much to start on. Unfortunately the control method is one that I particularly hate, y'know — turn to the direction you want to move, and then press forward — Yuckypoo! Apart from that there are a few neat puzzles to be solved, the occasional interesting thing to see — but on a grand scale it didn't appeal to me and it's not one that I'd recommend.

Anthony — CRITICISM

This one reminded me heavily of PANZADROME, the graphics and game play are just about the same. The actual idea of the game is very good, but it is marred by the total unplayability of the whole thing. You are given very little time to escape from dangerous situations, and the sound effects that are meant to warn you of impending doom are often drowned out by other noises. The idea of having mortars and depth-charges as well as lasers, makes the game much better. If only the thing were just a little easier then the game would be great, but all its problems just make it another 10 minute wonder.



PRESENTATION 75%
Very well presented. Starting out in at the deep end.

GRAPHICS 73%
The game's best asset.

SOUND 45%
Hums, zaps, bangs, bleeps and that's your lot.

PLAYABILITY 51%
Difficult controls, life is easily lost.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 45%
Not a game to which you will readily return.

VALUE FOR MONEY 48%
There are much better games to spend your dosh on.

OVERALL 55%
Nice game but much too hard.



THANATOS

Durell, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

In a mystical time the long standing struggle between the forces of good and evil rages still. Thanatos the destroyer, an ancient dragon whose eternal destiny seemed to lie in the conflict with the forces of the underworld has now seen a way to end all the futile fighting. He has made a packed with the enchantress 'Eros' but the odds are against him.

You control the large Thanatos who is set in the foreground. He is able to walk, swim, fly and burn his way through the landscape. He is also able to pick up objects such as rocks and even people by touching them with his open claws. On the bottom left of the screen is Thanatos's heart which beats according to the strain he is put under from the various creatures. If it starts beating too fast he must land and rest himself for if it turns blue it will stop altogether and Thanatos will die. In the bottom right there is a goblet indication his firepower. If it empties he must refuel himself by eating a witch. The witch is found by back tracking for a short distance and will appear tied between two stakes. Unfortunately the task is not that simple for the witch is guarded by a knight on horse back carrying a lance. He must be picked off his horse before Thanatos can simply walk over and devour the witch. Be careful for the knight's lance is deadly.

His first task is to collect Eros from the first of three castles. His travels are strewn with dangers. He will encounter giant Bees and Doves that swoop down and hastle him, he can of course use his fire to kill them. He must also fly through caves that hurl boulders down at him and he must fly over seas. Men on the ground shoot arrows from long bows and throw rocks. Boulders can be dropped on them or the men can be picked up and then dropped on other men. On reaching the castle he must land and burn down the

► *I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your castle down! Now, now, calm down.*

■ THANATOS is simply a pleasure to play. It is graphically superb with amazing detail to the dragon and the other huge creatures. It's a welcome change to have the controlling character so big and the nasties so small. It gave me a sense of superiority and seemed to encourage me to do well. The playability is excellent with movements of the dragon's head and claws so well animated — especially when flaming or picking things off the ground. My compliments to Durell for bringing out such a brilliant game — I wouldn't hesitate in buying it and suggest you do the same.

Mass

Heading towards towards the second castle, carring Eros, encounters the hideous mosters of the deep.

With rock in claw Thanatos pre pares to pulverise the odd peasant or two.

■ I found THANATOS highly compelling and very addictive. The whole game has been well thought out and should keep you enthralled for weeks. The level of difficulty is set just right on all levels and allows you to get very far into the game before things get tough. Everything on screen moves very fast, even when the second two headed dragon appears which is as long as Thanatos himself. The only thing I could find wrong with the program was the sound FX, they are too much like the Spectrum version, though effects such as the wing flaps have been improved. A great game and yet another classic from Durell.

Anthony

gates and once inside he must land by Eros and await for her to climb on to his neck. Be careful not to pick her up in the claws for it will end the game.

Now on to the second castle and again the journey is treacherous. As well as the Bees, Doves and ground soldiers when he flies over the sea giant serpentine monsters lunge at him from the depths. When in the caves huge spiders attempt to knock Eros from his neck. If she falls he must land and pick her up before she is eaten alive. On arrival at the second castle he once again must burn down the gates and inside he must locate and pick a spell book. Both Eros and the spell book must then be transported to the final castle.

On route he must will face his greatest challenge yet as he engages in aerial combat with a two headed dragon of similar size of his own. The monster defeated, he then must enter the castle land by a cauldron where Eros will get off and perform the spell of all spells to end the conflict for ever.

■ Yes, this is the game I've been waiting for so long. No more of this namby pamby saving the universe lark; no, just destroy it! Great! Despite his evil reputation, he really is quite a pleasant Dragon — and a pleasure to take control of. It's surprising how professional it has been executed because all the movements appear so natural that you don't really appreciate it until you examine it very closly. The choice of options on the select screen are so articulate that it is possible to play a game that is especially suited to you. A mention must go to the superb title scren music which sets the atmosphere perfectly, I can't remember a piece of music like it before. THANATOS is perfection in so many respects it's very hard to fault it — so I won't.

Richard

PRESENTATION 94%
Superbly flexible options, no mess on screen.

GRAPHICS 96%
Amazing attention to detail, great use of colour.

SOUND 93%
Haunting theme tune, with accurate spot FX.

PLAYABILITY 93%
Simple, uncomplicated controls making murder a delight.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 94%
You just can't keep your claws off it.

VALUE FOR MONEY 92%
Peasant slaying couldn't be cheaper.

OVERALL 94%
A highly innovative and addictive destructive adventure.



INFILTRATOR

US Gold, £9.95 cass, joystick and keys

Just how did you get involved in all this dangerous mission lark? You, Jonny 'Jimbo-Baby' McGibbets, infiltrator, super soldier, engineer and general all-round nice guy.

A message is received, headed 'The Destruction Of The World'. This gives you that tingling sensation that something dangerous is going to happen to your existence — it worries you. Apparently some rather nasty chap, known as the Mad leader, has an idea in his head that he can take over the world. You must infiltrate his base and stop his idea turning into reality.

You are equipped with a revolutionary new helicopter — imaginatively titled 'the Whizbang Enterprises Gizmo (tm) Attack Chopper'. The Gizmo has all the latest features that you would expect in such a chopper; a hi-fidelity stereo, designer skids, go-faster stripes and real imitation bearskin sport buckled seats (with a lumbar adjust!). Somehow you just don't think that these will come in quite as handy as a good old-fashioned gattling gun.

Anthony — CRITICISM

It's really hard to say anything very bad about this game. There is something for everyone and the game play is quite addictive (although I can't see the addiction lasting very long). The idea of fooling enemy planes at the right moments, and navigating your way to the second section of the game is a good one, the simulator though does leave something to be desired. I had great fun, for a while, just by knocking out the guards and blowing up the sentries, but when I got down to the real problem the game was quite enjoyable.

Mass — CRITICISM

I'm not keen on this at all — it appears far too cramped to be playable. To make matters worse the instructions go on and on and on. They are reasonably amusing, but so much of it seems to be insignificant waffle. After wading through the reams of instructions, when the game did eventually start I didn't really want to play it. And when I did, it left me feeling cold.

Upon entering the trusty Gizmo you find yourself facing a row of sophisticated controls. Through the windshield you can just about make out your home base from where you must take off; this is the 'flight simulation' part of the game.

With the battery engaged, the communications system operational, and the ignition switched into life, you are now prepared to begin your solo flight.

Once up in the clear blue sky, you must set the ADF (Automatic direction finder) which presets your flight course so that you will arrive at your destination with as little hassle as possible. Once you have taken the trouble to program it, it will always point in the direction of your destination. Moving off course will cause it to spin. When the ADF goes haywire it signals your arrival above Mad Leader's base, make a quick landing and you're off into the second part of the game. Your journey will not be a totally pleasant one, on the way you may encounter friendly or hostile craft; these need not be shot at if you are crafty enough. First ask them to identify themselves — when you have discovered which side they are on you can give them the correct code word. 'Infiltrator' for the goodies and 'Overlord' for the nasty mob. If the situation does become a bit difficult you might be in need of some self-protection, this comes in the form of either cannons, missiles, flares or chaffs. Once you have reached the Mad Leader HQ switch on the Whisper mode — this enables you to land without the enemy suspecting a thing — brilliant!

Quickly turn over the cassette, rewind it and set it in motion once more, this done, you're soon onto the ground mission.

Jimbo must complete the mission described to him in the briefing, and make his way back to the Gizmo which is patiently waiting for him deep in the forest.

The playing area is viewed from overhead, and you must guide Jimbo through the forest until he reaches Mad Leader's HQ. Luckily the chaps back at home had the foresight to provide you with an Action man survival kit — forged papers, gas bombs, sleeping gas, a mine detector, explosive charges and a camera. (this is essential if you are to record the ememies dastardly plans). As you progress you may be asked for identification, show them your papers and if they suspect anything, return to the option screen, select some gas, and blow the hell out of it!

Once inside the camp, it is possible to break into the buildings and rifle through drawers and other storage places. Should you set the alarm off (Phweeep! phweeep!) it just might be worth your while disguising yourself as a janitor — the outfit isn't too difficult to find. Having collated all the information that you need — quickly scamper back to the Gizmo and fly all the way home where, no doubt, another perilous mission awaits you.

Richard — CRITICISM

The thing that struck me about INFILTRATOR is its lack of consistency. You start off on a varient flight sim, go onto to a Rambo/Commando clone and finally finish up with a bit of detective work. It may be the case that US Gold are trying to offer something to everyone, but who is going to pay ten quid for a third of a game? Not me mateyboots. It's relatively compelling, mainly due to the fact that it's so complicated to approach. If you fancy something out of the ordinary give this a whirl — it might prove worth your while.

PRESENTATION 55%
Far too many instructions to take in.

GRAPHICS 60%
Interesting use of Mode one.

SOUND 55%
No tune, few meagre effects.

PLAYABILITY 46%
Slightly difficult due to slow responses.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 43%
You might want to complete it once.

VALUE FOR MONEY 42%
Gimme a 'R' Gimme a 'I' Gimme a 'P' — RIP OFF!

OVERALL 47%
Another mediocre conversion from US Gold

WERNER

Ariolasoft, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

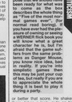
Werner is a friendly sort of chap, a bit of a prat, but friendly all the same. He's not exactly an oil painting — in fact he's downright ugly, more akin to Horace 'ugly face' Watkins than anything else. He's so ugly and stupid that nobody likes him (Ahhhhh!), and he's got no one to play with (sob, sob). Werner likes playing five games — and in all of them he needs your help to play. So be a good Samaritan and help him — you're all he's got!

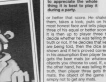
DIDDLING

Diddling is a game of human nature and dice. Player one shakes the dice and takes a peek, letting no other player see them. The dice are then passed unchanged to player two, he takes a look and must attempt to equal or better that score. He shakes them, takes a look, puts on his most honest face and tells player three of his equal or better score. It is then up to player three to decide whether he was telling the truth or not. If he decides that lies are being told, then the dice are shown and if he's proved correct in his assumption then player two gets the beer mats (or whatever objects you choose to use). If, on the other hand, he was telling the truth, then player three gets the mats. the object of the game is simply not to get any mats.

Anthony — CRITICISM

The comic type graphics are brilliant, unfortunately good graphics don't make a great game. I suppose that we should have been ready for what was to come as the box describes the whole thing as "Five of the most normal games ever", (for normal read boring). If you have ever had the pleasure of owning or seeing a WERNER flick book you will know what a great character he is, but I'm afraid that the game suffers from the same problems as Danger Mouse, you know nice idea, bad in reality. If you're into simplistic games then this may be just your cup of tea, but really if you are to appreciate the whole thing it is best to play it during a party.





TO THE PARTY . . .

Werner, despite being an utter prat, has a driving licence. And stranger still, he's been invited to a party. The road from his humble abode is an irritating one, full of everyday impediments such as jet-propelled screw drivers, flying melons, a condensor on a pogo stick and a blue ingnition key extractor. These must be avoided if you are to reach the party. It can be quite easily done by staying to the far right of the screen, but going at such high speed will make the engine overheat and crash!

WERNER'S PANIC TOUR

Hop into the trusty Wernermobile for another jolly jaunt down a seemingly quiet road. Werner can store four things in his car. Hopefully he's picked the right stuff to take on his journey or else 'He'll be up that famous creek without a paddle'. Well, maybe not, you should be safe if you pass objects slowly!



Richard — CRITICISM

The main attraction of this game is obviously its graphic and comical contents — unfortunately, there is very little else to marvel over. My favourite of the five games was the Motor Ride which is great fun, especially when poor old droopy-drawers gets hit in the face by a blue melon! All nice and messy! WERNER can be enjoyable when played in a group of mates, as it does tend to be a bit hectic. It's a shame that this game is a bit lacking because, with a bit more thought, it could have been a jolly good effort.

AMTIX Christmas Special

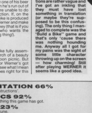


ASSEMBLE A MOTORBIKE

Having got a bit fed up with the Wernermobile, Werner is in search of alternative transport. A motorbike would be nice (or so he thinks), so he decides to build his own. At the top of the screen is a window from which bike parts can be extracted. Werner must carefully fit the bike together until he is happy. If you select a wrong piece for him he will get jolly annoyed with you and throw one of his beer bottles away. When he's run out of beer bottles you are unable to do any more construction. If, on the other hand, a full bike is produced you can sell it for Werner and make lots of luvverly money (that is if you can find anyone who wants the bloody silly looking thing!).

DRIVING IN FOG

With the Wernerbike fully assembled it's off in search of a beauty spot for an afternoon picnic. But oh dearie me, poor Werner's got trapped in the fog (see what I mean — nothing ever goes right for this poor unfortunate). Suddenly the road fills with juggernauts and all of them are BIG. You'll have to assist him in steering away from the oncoming vehicles, represented only by the trucks headlights. Only you can save him from hospital. CRUNCH! - Ooo dear, try again.



Mass — CRITICISM

No matter what anyone says to me they will never convince me that there is anything like a reasonable game in WERNER. It's all very well the graphics being excellent and the character being very comical but where's the gameplay? The instructions are rather vague and I've got an inkling that they must have lost something in translation (or maybe they're supposed to be this confusing). The only thing I managed to complete was the 'Build a Bike" game and that's only 'cause there was nothing hounding me. Anyway all I got for my pains was the sight of some little character throwing up on the screen — how charming! Still after playing WERNER it seems like a good idea.

PRESENTATION 66%
Badly written 'instructions'.

GRAPHICS 92%
Superb, the one thing this game has got.

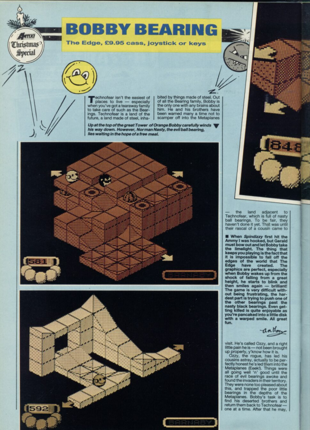
SOUND 23%
Bleep, burp. No tune.

PLAYABILITY 76%
Easy to get into . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 54%
. . . but you probably won't want to ever again.

VALUE FOR MONEY 62%
Bit pricey for a few nice graphics.

OVERALL 60%
Like being hit in the face with a rotten melon.



BOBBY BEARING

The Edge, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

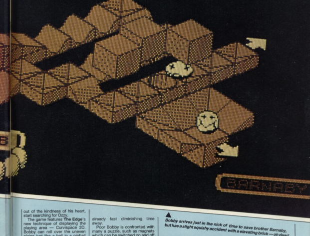
Technofear isn't the easiest of places to live — especially when you've got a tearaway family to take care of such as the Bearings. Technofear is a land of the future, a land made of steel, inhabited by things made of steel. Out of all the Bearing family, Bobby is the only one with any brains about him. He and his brothers have been warned many a time not to scamper off into the Metaplanes — the land adjacent to Technofear, which is full of nasty ball bearings. To be fair, they haven't done it yet. That was until their rascal of a cousin came to visit. He's called Ozzy, and a right little pain he is — not been brought up properly, y'know how it is.

Up at the top of the great Tower of Orange Bobby carefully winds his way down. However, Norman Nasty, the evil ball bearing, lies waiting in the hope of a free meal. ▼

■ When *Spindizzy* first hit the Ammy I was hooked, but Gerald must bow out and let Bobby take the limelight. The thing that keeps you playing is the fact that it is impossible to fall off the edges of the world that The Edge have created. The graphics are perfect, especially when Bobby wakes up from the shock of falling from a great height, he starts to blink and then smiles again — brilliant! The game is very difficult without being frustrating, the hardest part is trying to push one of the other bearings past the nasty black bearings. Even getting killed is quite enjoyable as you're pancaked into a little disk with a warped smile. All great fun.

Anthony

Ozzy, the rogue, has led his cousins astray, actually to be perfectly honest he's led them into the Metaplanes (Eeek!). Things were all going well 'n' good until the race of evil bearings awoke and found the invaders in their territory. They were none too pleased about this, and trapped the poor little bearings in the depths of the Metaplanes. Bobby's task is to find his deserted brothers and return them back to Technofear — one at a time. After that he may,



out of the kindness of his heart, start searching for Ozzy.

The game features **The Edge**'s new technique of displaying the playing area — Curvispace 3D. Bobby can roll over the uneven plains just like a ball in a pinball machine. The game uses flick screen to simulate travel from screen to screen, and with the extra help of the directional arrows illustrating the possible exit points, life should not prove too difficult. With Bobby being a bearing it is impossible for him to fall off one screen and onto another — he must use the correct exit points. However, as the landscape may suddenly drop vertically Bobby may fall and get awfully confused at his predicament. Unfortunately, doing this takes some of his already fast diminishing time away.

Poor Bobby is confronted with many a puzzle, such as magnets which can be switched on and off to activate blocks. Bobby may find there are objects blocking his path, these can be removed by passing over hidden switches embedded on the same screen. Air pipes litter the landscape and blow Bobby into the air, although this might not sound very helpful, it can be, as they are useful for crossing gaps in the scenery. When you find one of your kin ball bearings, push it back to the entrance to Technofear and safely home — once you've done that go back and get the rest (there's five in all). Remember — you've only got until curfew time before the gates are closed for ever, so hurry, and remember — don't lose your bearings (hee hee!).

■ It's hard to believe that a game can create such a charismatic character as Mr Bearing. It's simply sheer excellence. Although it may look similar to *Spindizzy* it is so much more involved, it just has the same 'tone'. The graphics are superb, especially Bobby's face when he falls from a height — he has a confused little expression on face and eyes wrinkle up in shock — cute! There is hardly any frustration as you can't fall of a screen — you can only leave via the exit points — it's all just so compulsive. As with any Edge product, *Bobby Bearing* is a very easy idea — superbly executed, and quite simply, GREAT!

Richard

■ Spherical object type games seem to be all the rage nowadays and after playing *Bobby Bearing* I can see why. The game is superbly simple in concept with great appeal and excellent playability. As you can't fall off a screen all you have to watch out for is not to fall off the various constructions and blocks that squash poor Bobby. Finding Bobby's brothers is just a case of wandering about, but shunting them. around can prove rather taxing. A great idea very well implemented. It's a must!

Mass

▲ *Bobby arrives just in the nick of time to save brother Barnaby, but has a slight squishy accident with a elevating brick — oh dear!*

PRESENTATION 92%
Uncomplicated instructions, good on screen.

GRAPHICS 95%
Superb use of 3D plains — with a cute central character.

SOUND 86%
Jolly tune burbles on through the game.

PLAYABILITY 94%
Simple to get to grips with . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 93%
. . . but hell to solve.

VALUE FOR MONEY 91%
This is how high the standard of full price games should be.

OVERALL 93%
Don't say ballbearings to this, get it Now.

AMTIX! Accolade

HERE COMES TARZAN
Ahhhh Aieeeeee Ohhh — Crash!



Swing through the trees with the greatest of ease — that daring young man on his flying . . . Sorry, got a bit carried away then. Tarzan swings out from Martech. Sorry. Why can't Tarzan win at cards in the jungle? Cos there's lots of Cheetahs! Oh, read the preview . . .

Following in the footsteps of the film, **Tarzan** from Martech is based around the Legend of Greystoke. Having returned to the dense African jungle after a spell in England's green and pleasant land he discovered that Lady Jane Greystoke has been captured by the Wamabo, a strange African tribe. They threaten Tarzan with Jane's sacrifice unless he can relocate the seven gemstones stolen from the tribal shire, thought to be the Eyes of the Rainbow.

Running along with the greatest of ease Tarzan must search every nook and cranny in the jungle until he can find the stones. Tarzan will encounter several different locations such as Caves, in which dwell poisonous spiders, Tribal villages where the head hunters throw spears and the dense undergrowth is alive with tigers and snakes. The game itself takes the form of a flick screen arcade adventure with quite a bit of fighting thrown in for good measure. Various objects can be collected such as ropes which will allow him to swing over pits, and torches which give him visibility in the caves. We will, as always, be taking a critical look at Tarzan next month.

RICHARD EDDY

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE (With no mess to clear up afterwards)

Well I did try telling you all last month in the news, but would you believe me? No! There really is, no quibbling at all here, something — make that someone — living in the bowels of my Amstrad. I know he's there — he told me.

At least that's what I think he told me. His speech usually goes something along the following lines: ''Meeowqwoowobbltl . . .'' But you do get used to it. No! I'm not insane! Let me explain.

Last year David Crane, an expert on personal computers, discovered **Little Computer People** (LCP) living inside his Commodore 64. Well, after further exploration into the science he's made a breakthrough — their cousins live in Amstrads! Great — Where do I get one?

Well, them clever chaps down at Chateau Activision have come up with this absolute whizz of an idea — a disk program that creates a house for them on your screen. You can then coaxe them out and make them do all kinds of silly things. Take a shower, feed the dog, tickle their necks — ahhh! Brilliant! They're the computer equivalent of Goldfish and I love them!

RICHARD EDDY

Ahh, cute. Look at him there, coming down the stairs. but where is doggy? A bit blurred but he's there — scampering after food no doubt — greedy thing. Actually he is ponging a bit so maybe I should suggest a shower?

The first Amstrad Little Computer Person — he's called Arnold, groan.



GIANT POSTERS!

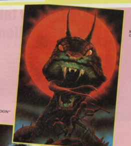
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CHRISTMAS STOCKING FILLERS (THE FANCY ASSORTMENT)

Still not got any ideas? Here's another nice selection from all over the place. Mr Eddy takes you to Ocean, Durell, US Gold, Novagen, The Edge, Rainbird and Palace with their prospective Christmas releases . . .

GAUNTLET, the smash hit arcade game for two players is on it's way to the Amstrad. US Gold are certain that it's going to be a hit - we shall find out next month . . .



You've thrown it down, now take up the challenge!



This Atari coin-op classic needs very little introduction. If you've misspent, or still misspending, your youth in the arcades you'll no doubt know about **Gauntlet** — the arcade machine that has sold well over 9,000 units. The team who brought you The Eidolon are busily converting it as you read this and it's nearing completion.

Gauntlet — the game — is based on the two player version of the arcade game, which allows two players to play any of the four characters available, an arrow shooting Elf, a spell bungling Wizard, an axe wielding Barbarian and a sword brandishing Valkyrie.

The idea of the game is a simple one — travel through over a hundred different dungeons and collect chests of treasure. The only problem is that the dungeons are guarded by all sorts of diabolical meanies which give chase as soon as they see you. Ghosts, grunts and wizards relentlessly pursue the heroes in large numbers and there are also lobbers which chuck rocks at the hapless adventurers.

US Gold are confident this is going to be the one to watch for and from what I've seen of it so far I don't think he's far wrong.

The official Dakka dakka Boom! game

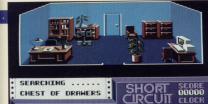
Back to the days of World War One when biplanes ruled the skies.

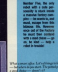
In charge of a powerful plane you must take to the air and manoeuvre the plane as best as you can to defeat the oncoming force who seem intent on killing you off. Don't get me wrong — **Deep Strike** is not a simulation. It's more a sort of shoot 'em up that looks like a sim. So pull on the goggles, wrap the fluttering scarf around you and take to the air and realise your childhood ambition. (Dakka, dakka, boom, neeeeeeow!).

So you wanna take to the skies and be a well cool 'n' handsome World War One fighting ace? Well, here's your chance with DEEP STRIKE — Biggles has nothing on you when you're up, up and awaeeeee!



Flying over enemy terrain you've just shot one hell of a nasty red bomber - but there's no rest another one is closing in. Ready . . . Aim . . . Fire!





Number Five, the only robot with a cute personality is stuck inside a massive factory complex — he wants to, and must, escape from this hideous life. However once out of the Factory he must then contend with a mad chase — go on, be kind — help a robot in trouble!

What a smart office. Lot's of things to be searched — but where do you start. The potted plant seems a good choice — doesn't it?

The game of the film of the Robot of the factory

Ocean's latest bid to find the ultimate film tie-in lies in **Short Circit**. You take control of Number Five, a robot from the Novarobotics Company. One night he was hit by a freak bolt of lightning that charged his pleasure circuits and gave him a warm glowing sensation inside his CPU. To his surprise he suddenly discovered that he's had his own personality. As with any robot who has a personality he's got ambition — no longer does he want to be a night watchman in a factory he wants to break free and explore the world.

The screen is split between a flick screen playing area illustrating the factory and a status window. Within the status window is a printout of all his thoughts and findings. When you take control of Number Five you will be able to link him to the factory computers in order to gain assistance to escape. To make his eventual escape from the factory Number Five must locate the correct pass to let him out.

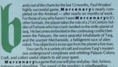
So, he is free — or so he thinks. Once Number Five has escaped from the factory the second part of the game comes into play. This is a mad chase sequence — Number Five is being pursued by a bunch of cretins that aren't too happy about his escape.

You can find out if Number Five will escape in time when it's fully reviewed next month, alternatively you could watch the film which is out in the first week in December.

A nice load of hype from PR man, Tim Bosher



Save your skin as the Palayars and the Mechanoids battle it out around you. Locate various crafts and make quick your escape before you're caught up in the raging battle.

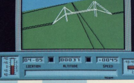


Barely out of the charts for the last 12 months, Paul Woakes' highly successful game, **Mercenary** is nearly completed on the Amstrad — after nearly six months of work. For those of you who haven't seen **Mercenary** in it's other formats, the player takes the role of a 21st Century Soldier of Fortune who has crash-landed on the strife-planet of targ. He becomes embroiled in the continuing conflict between the Palayars, the once peaceful inhabitants of Targ, and the usurper Mechanoids, a belligerent race of alien robot. You objective is to escape from the planet a live man.

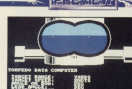
You can fly in a variety of craft and explore Targ's mysterious underground complexes and orbitting Palayar Colony Craft; and collect useful objects to aid your quest.

Mercenary is a game that you will play and play - fast, furious, tortuous and absorbing. The speed of the graphics is mindboggling . . . Amazing! It's a must!

So speaketh Mr Bosher. Thankyouverymuch Tim. Fine, we'll see how it matches up in the first issue next year.



Flying in towards the bridge — carefully now. Look, it's coming a bit fast, you're not on course, watch it you're going to cra . . .



The official 'Dive, dive dive — Pheeeeeep!' game

Despite US Gold trying to turn every coin-op arcade machine into a computer game they've opted for something a bit different for those amongst you, who prefer a bit of brain work. **Silent Service** places you in the role of a commander of a US Navy Submarine in the South pacific in the Second World War. Apart from being able to practice at just running the submarine in simple engagements, there are scenarios of varying complexity. As these are set at different times during the war, details such as the modification of torpedoes and capabilities of both your vessel and those of the enemy are taken into account. For example, this may mean that some of your torpedoes are duds — a problem that that plagued American subs until later on in the war.

The game is extremely flexible — game parameters include the intelligence of the enemy destroyers, limited visibility and whether or not the angle-on-bow needs to be inputted to define the direction of the torpedoes to name but a few. It allows sophisticated modification to any scenario. This may not take the market by storm but for those it may appeal to it will prove popular; whether it is rated highly or not you'll find out in the very near future.

Take command of a sub in the Second World War — learn manoeuvres that will guide you from scenario to scenario in the war. Your careful captainship will dictate the whole of your journey, your success or your failure. Find out how the two prospective captains, Valducci and Eddy, fare when the game is fully reviewed.

Periscopes up — no time for a spot of bird watching here there's torpedoes to be fired.

Saving The World With A Comic Book Hero

Many years ago, the world as we know it was divided — the people aligned themselves to either the North or the South sectors. For many years the opposing sides seriously distrusted each other — and inevitably talks finally broke down and war was declared. Both factions had developed powerful, futurisitc suits of armour. But they were never used as the button was pressed and life on Earth all but came to an end.

Centuries have passed and the world has slowly reborn, a new race has evolved leading a simple and peaceful life. They form a new religion — based on the scrolls — blueprints of the original armour. Suddenly Earth is attacked by alien invaders who enslave all able-bodied men and send them back to their planet to mine the planet's valuable minerals. The alien oppressors rule their planet from deep inside a dormant volcano.

The elders of the new Earth race are getting a bit miffed with all their mateys being carried off, and decide to secretly train young men to overthrow the tyrants. From amongst this new breed of warriors, you — Tal — have been chosen to save the race.

Tal is transported to the base of the Volcano. A hideous forest lies there, infested with horrific monsters that are out to stop you succeeding. Higher up the moutainside is the ruined city. To travel further into the city you need to locate the sacred armour and the four attachments which operate it. The further you travel into the volcano, the nearer you get to the vital generator room where the whole caboodle can be switched off — but beware of the immense radiation that surrounds it.

Will Tal find the armour? Will he penetrate the stronghold? Will he defy the radiation? Find out from myself and Mass in the full review — next munf!



Following in the same style as previous Palace games, ANTIRIAD promises a visually stunning arcade adventure. Written by comic book illustrator, Dan Malone, his comic story book accompanies the package, telling the story of the Sacred Armour. The game should be in the shops by the time you read this and costs £8.99.

Equipped with the armour, Tal roams the forbidden city in search of the generating room — but watch out for them there meanies!

The latest game from The Edge, **Shao-lin's Road** marks a change for The Edge. Normally associated with such original games as *Fairlight* and *Bobby Bearing* they've opted for a coin-op conversion for their Christmas treat. **Shao-Lins Road** is the follow up to the smash hit *Yie Ar Kung Fu* by Konami and follows the fortunes of Lee who has just mastered the legendary art of Chin's Shao-Lin. The game opens as Lee finds himself trapped in the temple by hoards of Triads — a nasty bunch of opponents if ever he saw some. Using his kicking skills and magical powers he must fight off the Triads and get out of the temple — else he will perish, he education in vain. However, should he escape from the Temple he can make his way on the road to freedom.

With each step that Lee takes he will encounter more and more Triads, at the end of each stage he will discover one Triad who is more skillful. Defeating him allows Lee onto the following segment of his oriental adventure. Luckily he's equipped with a range of skills that allows him to kick, jump, and manoeuvre himself around the various floors on each level. Killing certain opponents will result in a fire ball hurtling across the screen — successfully catching this ball and he will temporarily possess one of several magical powers.

The actual game itself is still under development but in the mean time here's a few piccys to feast your eyes on.

Konami's hit coin-op game comes to life courtesy of The Edge. Take hero, Lee, through a series of adventures where he will encounter several opponents also proficient in the mystical art of Chin Shao-Lin. Battle on through the torturous road until he can eventually find the path to freedom.

A scene from the temple — under the watchful eye of the Buddha, Lee must prove himself worthy of the title of a master.

Travel the road to freedom . . .

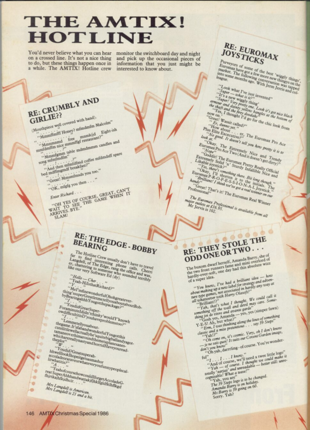


Tackle a network of passages and tunnels in Pandora's first release. Guards lie in wait so your progress will have to be on absolute tip toe if you want to get away scott free.

In **Into The Eagles Nest** you are out to rescue prisoners of war from a castle. This is the debut game by latest new software company, Pandora. They may be a new born company but this release is certainly not going to be wet behind the ears. The game is set in a Colditz style castle and what you must do is to single handedly storm the castle and liberate eight prisoners from the clutches of the German army. As a lone man on a seemingly impossible assignment you must be quick and deadly with your limited bullets and therefore any supplies that are needed must be "requisitioned" from the enemy. First aid, food, keys and ammunition must all be picked up as you fight through the corridors of the prison. There are even some valuables that can be picked up as booty if the fancy takes you.

Action takes place on four big levels that cover 224 screens in total and the graphics are among some of the prettiest to grace the Amstrad as can be seen from our screen shot. There are even toilets and hand basins to add to the realism of it all. There are just the other three levels to be finished now and the sound to be added so **Into the Eagles Nest** should be finished before Christmas and you can bet that we'll be getting our hands on it as soon as it's finished.

From little fledgelings . . .



THE AMTIX! HOTLINE

You'd never believe what you can hear on a crossed line. It's not a nice thing to do, but these things happen once in a while. The AMTIX! Hotline crew monitor the switchboard day and night and pick up the occasional pieces of information that you just might be interested to know about.

RE: CRUMBLY AND GIRLIE??

(Mouthpiece well covered with hand).

"......."

"Mmmffmfff Honey? mfmdmfm Malcolm"

"..........."

"Mmnmnmd free mnmkjjd Eight-ish mmfdmffm nice mmmffgf restaurant?"

".......?"

"Mmmfgmm table mdmdmmm candles and song mfmfmdfm"

"...!.....?"

"And then mfmfdfmd coffee mfdmdsff spare bed mdffmgmdf breakfast?"

"...!......."

"Great! Mmsmfmsds you too."

"......."

"OK, mfgfg you then . . ."

Enter Richard . . .

"OH YES OF COURSE, GREAT, CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE GAME WHEN IT ARRIVES. BYE."

SLAM!

RE: EUROMAX JOYSTICKS

Purveyors of some of the best 'wiggly things', Euromax have got a few more new thingys on the market. The following conversation was tapped into some months ago. With Jerm Jerris and colleague.

"Look what I've just invented"

"*Super — what is it?*"

"It's a new wiggly thing'

"*Super! Very pretty one. Look it's got nice black armour and dainty yellow bangles at the bottom of the shaft and the firey doodahs*"

"Yes, I thought I'd go for the chic look from now on.'

"Great! Wassit called?"

"*Er, dunno yet.*"

"How about . . . er, The Euromax Pro Ace Plus Elite Excecutive?"

"*No good. It doesn't tell you how pretty it is to look at.*"

"Okay. The Extremely Nice and Trendy Euromax Pro Ace Two (And it doesn't get dirty)"

"*Nope*"

"Goddit! The Euromax Pretty Really Official Extremely Solid 'n' Sturdy Infallible Nice and Likable joystick?"

"*Yes, there's something there. Bit long though.*"

"Okay, I'll shorten it to the initials. The Euromax P-R-O-F-E-S-S-I-O-N-A-L Joystick."

"*Brilliant! I think we've got a real winner on our hands*"

"Great! That's it! The Euromax Real Winner Professional"

The Euromax Professional is available from all major outlets at £16.95.

Mr Jervis is 102.

RE: THE EDGE - BOBBY BEARING

The Hotline Crew usually don't have to travel far to find interesting phone calls. Cherri Langdell, of The Edge, rang the office and was, er, chattering to someone who sounded terribly like our very Software Ed (dy).

"*Hello — Cher . . .*"

"Yeah-HiIsthatRichard?"

"*Y . . .*"

"MeI'mfinewonderfulOhohgreatever-thing'ssuperGreatletmetellyouaboutaboutBob-byBearingahhhYougotthepackage?"

"*I . . .*"

"YoudidGreatSuper-ForaminuteIdidn'tthinky'wouldY'knowh owdifficultitisD'youhaveproblemstoo?"

"*I . . .*"

"Lemmetellyouabout-thegame.It'sfabandwonderfulYougotthis cutelittlewellactuallyhe'squitebigballandyagot-tamaneoverhimaroundthemetaplanesanes-whicharereallynastyandhorridHaveyouread-theplot"

"*W . . .*"

"Youdid?Greatsuperah-hhwelllookIhopeitgetsasmashor accoladeoraraveorwhateveryoufunnypeoplecal-litwhatitis?"

"*A . . .*"

"YeahofcoursehowcouldIforgetAccoladeG-reat SuperAhhhandwattakjfjhklfgldfklhflkgd fhjrtkajhfkjdhcir. . . ."

Mrs Langdell is American.

Mrs Langdell is 21 and a bit.

RE: THEY STOLE THE ODD ONE OR TWO . . .

The buxom dwarf herself, Amanda Barry, she of the two front runners fame and mini overlord of hardly-over-soft, one day had this absolute wizz of a super idea.

"*You know, I've had a brilliant idea — how about making up a new label for strategy and adventure type games, not associated in hardly any way at all whatsoever with Harry Olasoft?*"

"Brilliant!?"

"*Yah, that's what I thought. We could call it something off the wall and devil may care. Something joi de vivre and avante garde*"

"Gosh yes, Amanda — yes, yes (simper fawn) Y-E-S! Ah, but what?"

"*Erm, I was thinking along the lines of something classic and a mite pretentious . . . say 39 Steps*"

"Yah!?"

"*Oh come on, it's cosmic. Very, oh I don't know — je ne sais quoi! It suits our Covent Garden image, don't you know*"

"Oh yah, darrrling - of course. You're wonderful"

"*I . . . I . . . I know.*"

"And of course, we'll need a twee little logo"

"*Yah — of course. I thought we could make it totally 'zarjaz' and unreadable — better still: unrecognisable! What a tease!*"

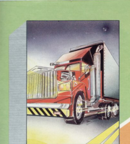
"Yah, you are"

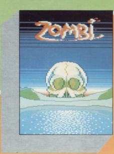
The 39 Steps logo is to be changed.

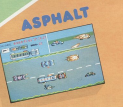
Amanda Barry is on holiday.

Ms Barry is 39 going on 60.

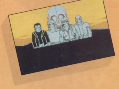
Sorry. Yah?











1991 : The year of all dangers, motorways have become bloody battle fields, full of looters of all kinds. Your mission is to drive an artic-lorry changed into a tank and to carry your cargo into safety.

When there is no space left in hell, the dead are coming back to earth... Your last possible issue is: a supermarket where you get down, body and soul, piloted by an ICON.



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